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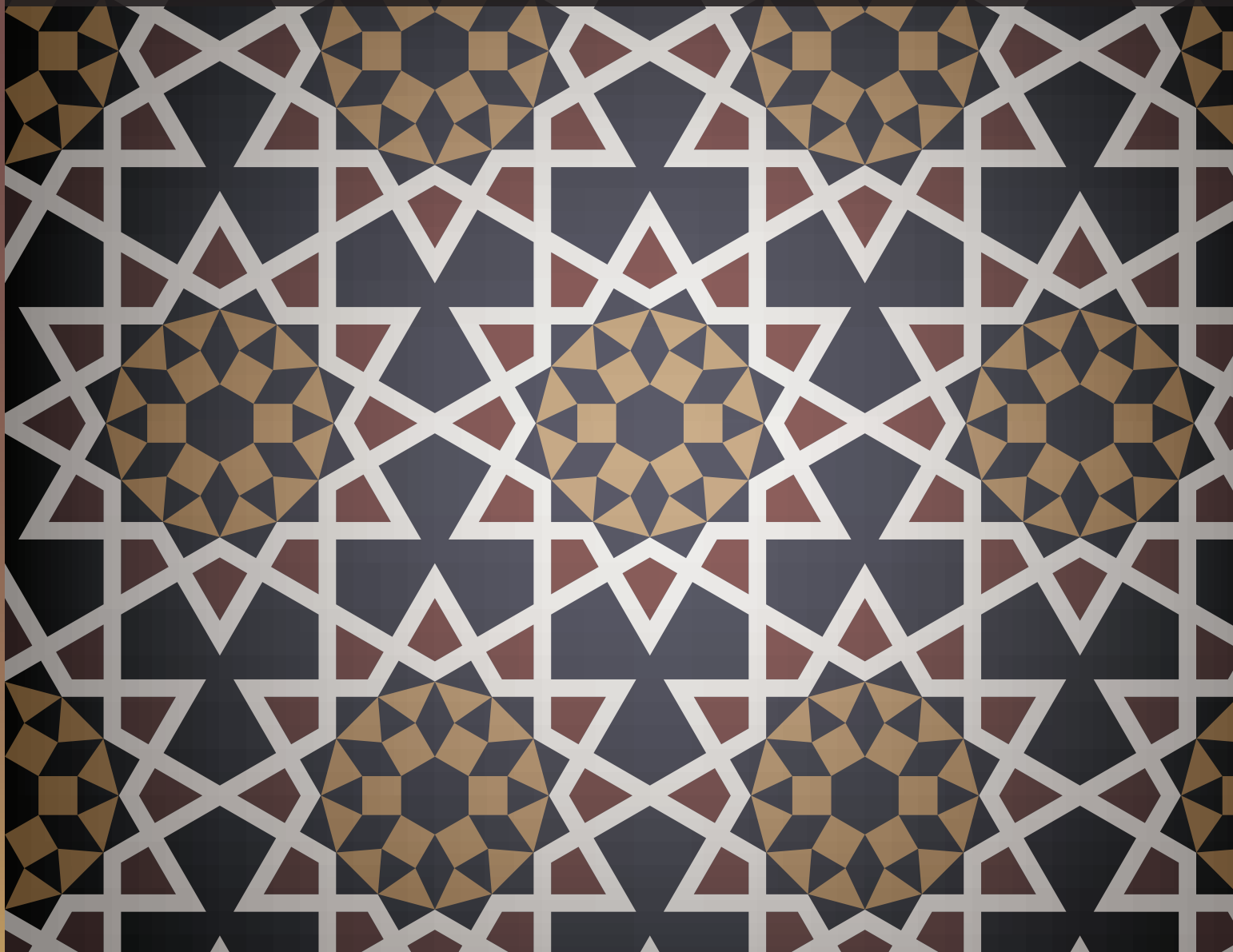
Transnational Islam in South and Southeast Asia

Movements, Networks, and Conflict Dynamics

By Peter Mandaville, Farish A. Noor, Alexander Horstmann, Dietrich Reetz, Ali Riaz, Animesh Roul, Noorhaidi Hasan, Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, Rommel C. Banlaoi, and Joseph C. Liow



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FOREWORD

Events in recent years have drawn considerable attention to the growing importance of transnational Muslim networks in the political and conflict dynamics of South and Southeast Asia. While much analysis has focused on militant groups such as Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, other radical Islamist groups (e.g., Hizb ut-Tahrir), broad-based ideologies (e.g., the Muslim Brotherhood movement and Jamaat-i-Islami), and even predominantly quietist networks (e.g., Jama'at al-Tabligh and various Sufi brotherhoods) also exert significant social and political influence.

This report represents the culmination of a year-long initiative launched by NBR to explore the landscape of transnational Islam in South and Southeast Asia and assess its implications for these regions' sociopolitical futures. NBR assembled an international team of experts to assess transnational Islam as it manifests in Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The team shared preliminary findings at a workshop co-hosted by NBR and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore in June 2008, inviting audience participation from a cross-section of academic, government, and think-tank communities in Singapore and the region to further inform the project's research and the papers in this report.

Given its considerable policy relevance, exploring emerging trends and developments in Muslim Asia will remain a priority research area for NBR's Political and Security Affairs Group. NBR studies have found that there are many and varied roles of Islam in Asia that go far beyond the actions of the radical fringes that have drawn much attention in recent years. In addition to its work on Islamist terrorism, the organization has also sought to engage less visible yet no less critical issues, related to other global economic, political, and cultural trends influencing Muslim societies in Asia today, to broaden the debate and better inform policy leaders. We look forward to continued interaction with the policy community on this subject as well as to a wide distribution of this report's research findings.

I would like to recognize and express appreciation to the members of the research team whose work appears in these pages. It has been a true pleasure to work with each of them, and the project has benefited immensely from their expertise and professionalism. In particular, I would like to thank Peter Mandaville for his vision and leadership, which guided the project from its inception. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the NBR project team, fellows, and editors, whose efforts contributed to the success of this initiative.

A. Mahin Karim
Senior Project Director
The National Bureau of Asian Research

THE NATIONAL BUREAU *of* ASIAN RESEARCH

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Transnational Islam in Asia: Background, Typology and Conceptual Overview

Peter Mandaville

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper provides an overview of the history of transnational Islam in South and Southeast Asia, identifying key vectors of religious transmission and points of continuity between historical and contemporary patterns of cross-regional Islamic discourse. The paper proposes that contemporary manifestations of transnational Islam problematize conventional categorizations of movements and political ideologies through frequent cross-fertilization across political and militant tendencies. The paper further suggests that the emerging geography of globalized Islam calls into question the extent to which political manifestations of Islam can be analyzed with exclusive reference to local circumstances or sources of discontent.

MAIN FINDINGS

Manifestations of contemporary transnational Islam in South and Southeast Asia occur in four primary forms: Sufi brotherhoods, renewalist/pietistic movements, Islamist parties and groups, charitable organizations and *da'wa* organizations; the primary conduits for the cross-border transmission of Islam today include scholarly exchange and study abroad, labor migration, new media, and ritual obligations (e.g. pilgrimage). Influences from transnational Islam do not involve the subversion or eradication of local religious sensibilities but rather a far more complex dynamic whereby external ideas and beliefs are adapted to and grafted onto existing worldviews and conditions. Transnational Islam is not exclusively about religion but can sometimes represent a vocabulary through which broader global debates about political and socioeconomic disenfranchisement can be engaged. The fluidity of transnational Islam on the ground in specific country contexts is such that the social reality of such movement rarely corresponds exactly to the categories and orientations suggested by conventional analytical typologies (e.g. sharp distinctions between 'modernist' and 'traditionalist' groups).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The involvement of transnational Islamic groups in a localized conflict is frequently associated with an escalation dynamic that raises the ideological stakes of the dispute through association with 'global' Muslim causes and by introducing new resources (ideational and material) into the conflict equation.
- Transnational Islamic groups leverage the political sentiments that accrue from both government responses to Muslim grievances and to broader geopolitical issues (e.g. global war on terror, war on Iraq) to build local constituencies.
- At least one form of transnational Islamic networking—that between political parties and movements operating in the 'justice and development' mold—holds the potential to serve as an effective and largely democratic space for the aggregation of Muslim discontent and the pursuit of social justice in the name of Islam.
- The complex geographies of transnational Islam, which involve organizations and diasporas located well beyond the confines of South and Southeast Asia, mean that efforts to exert policy influence on Muslim actors in the region may well involve interventions and actors located in the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

While the theme of transnational Islam in Asia most readily brings to mind recent events in countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia, or networks and movements such as Al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah and the Taliban, transnational Islamic influences in South and Southeast Asia have a long and complex history dating back hundreds of years. And, while it is these contemporary groups and conflict situations that will constitute the primary focus of the present study, it is important both to contextualize them in historical terms, and to gain a better understanding of how they relate to the diverse range of transnational Islamic currents to be found in the region today.

How were the conduits through which contemporary Muslim social and political activists operate between Asia and the Middle East—or, indeed, within Asia itself—first established? How have mainstream mass Islamist movements from the Arab world, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, influenced politics and conflict dynamics in South and Southeast Asia, and how do they intersect with radical and militant groups? Where do centuries-old Sufi networks and more recent pietist movements, such as the Tablighi Jama'at, fit into the picture of contemporary transnational Islam in the region?

This paper provides the historical background necessary for understanding the role of transnational Islam in Asia today. Beginning with a brief survey of Islam's transmission to Asia from the Middle East, this section of the paper will focus on the interplay between nation-states and transnational Muslim movements during the twentieth century. Next we will survey and organize the diverse forms (and functions) of transnational Islam in South and Southeast Asia through the development of a typology of actors, groups, and drivers of Muslim transnationalism. Finally, and by way of building a foundation for the thematic and country case studies to follow, we will identify and briefly discuss some of the major issues—both conceptual and empirical—relating to contemporary transnational Islam. This will involve looking at different ways of thinking about the meaning and significance of transnational Islam in the region, the role of transnational Islam within the wider "religious field" and particularly its interaction with other forms of religious transnationalism (e.g. Christian missionary activity), the role of state-sponsored religious transnationalism, and the impact of issues such as social class on the organizational dynamics of transnational Islam. The impact of Muslim transnationalism on local conflicts, domestic and regional politics, and broader issues of social cohesion will also be considered in this final section.

It is important to emphasize that the case studies contained in this study do not constitute a comprehensive or exhaustive inventory of contemporary transnational Islam in Asia. Rather, they represent a mixture of key movements from a policy perspective, and other groups illustrative of distinctive trends and types that collectively define the regional ecosystem of Muslim transnationalism. While an analytical typology is offered below, the complexity and diversity of Islamic networking in Asia cannot—as we will see—be reduced exclusively to such a framework.

Historically Transnational: Islam, the Middle East, and Asia[1]

Commercial ties between South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East predate the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, whose home city of Mecca in western Arabia was a waypoint

[1] Unless otherwise specified, the accounts of historical Muslim transnationalism in South and Southeast Asia offered below rely on the standard works by Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977) and Ira Marvin Lapidus, A *History of Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

on the trading networks that brought merchandise and commodities up to the Levant from south Arabian ports. The transmission of Islam from the Middle East to Asia—initially to the Indian subcontinent—begins as early as the second decade of the eighth century, reaching its southeastern extremes in the Malay archipelagos by the thirteen century. Janet Abu-Lughod's book *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* provides us with an account of something akin to "proto-globalization" in the southeastern quadrant of the globe during this period, with rich commercial, scholarly and political ties springing up to connect East Africa to Southern Arabia, and on across to South and Southeast Asia. Indeed, as a weakened centralized Muslim polity in the Middle East found itself plundered by foreign invaders, the Indian Ocean emerges as a vibrant space of Muslim commercial and intellectual exchange. Although some of the societies encompassed within this mini-world system, such as parts of present-day Malaysia and Indonesia, took several hundred years to embrace the religion, the centrality of Muslim traders and scholars within these networks ensured that Islam served from early on as an important form of transnational symbolic "currency." The vectors of mercantile activity and human mobility produced by this system have endured in certain important respects, forming the foundation of communal and intellectual ties that link Muslims in South and Southeast Asia to the Middle East, as well as to each other, right up into the contemporary period.

Transnationalism and the History of Islam in South Asia

Sind and the northwestern coast of India fell to Arab Muslims during the Umayyad Empire early in the eighth century, but Islam's presence in the subcontinent is really only consolidated two centuries later with the rise of the Ghaznavids—an Iranian-Afghan dynasty that paid nominal lip service to the authority of the Abbasids in Baghdad, but which ruled, for all intents and purposes, as a regional sovereign. Penetrating into northern India after capturing Lahore in the first half of the eleventh century, the Ghaznavids placed particular emphasis on capturing the Isma'ili (that is, Shi'i) coastal towns that had been established by the Fatimids in Cairo and which still maintained profitable trade with North Africa.[2] In the wake of these Fatimid footholds, relatively large numbers of Isma'ilis migrated to India from Yemen in the thirteenth centuries. When the Ghaznavids turned to Turkic *mamluks* (slave-soldiers) in favor of local elites to serve as their proxies in the late twelfth centuries, a relationship with the Abbasid Caliph helped to buttress their religio-political legitimacy.

Over the next four hundred years, the systematic Muslim conquest of South Asia would proceed at the hands of various dynasties, several of them dominated by *mamluks*. Under the Ghurids, Khalijis, and Tughluqs, Muslim rule extended to Gujarat, Rajasthan, the Deccan region, and much of southern India. Turkic forces continued to be imported from central Asia to rival the influence of local notables, and there was ongoing recognition of the 'Abbasid caliph in Cairo—now also under *mamluk* rule, but with the Caliph by this time acting as little more than a symbolic figurehead.

The central Middle East was not, however, the only external reference point for South Asia's Muslim rulers, with Iranian conceptions of political authority also having some important influence—especially through the literary form of the kinship manual, modeled after the Seljuq advisor Nizam al-Mulk's celebrated eleventh century work the *Siyasatnama* (Book of Government). Literary work also served as an important inter-regional conduit in Bengal, with local notables

[2] Patricia Risso, *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

and mystics establishing literary Bengali via the translation of Arabic and Persian works. And, while the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries saw political authorities such as the Sultanate of Gujarat patronizing local languages and generating a distinctly Indian idiom of Islam (through architectural forms, storytelling, local saintly figures, etc.), notables, soldiers and religious scholars from Central Asia and Afghanistan continued to rule Muslim India.

The persistence of many elements of local Hindu culture is an important element in the growth and phenomenal spread of Sufi (popular mystical) Islam in India.[3] In addition to translating texts from other key Muslim languages, Sufi saints—whose social function readily mapped onto pre-existing Hindu categories—adopted local languages and permitted the continued practice of Hindu rituals rather than imposing a dogmatic Islamic orthodoxy. This cross-fertilization worked both ways, with Hindus, for example, even participating in the Shi'i commemoration of 'Ashura, along with other festivals associated with popular Sufi saints.[4] While Sufis played a prominent role in bringing strong numbers of Indians to Islam, the enduring presence of Hindu culture and its concomitant social structures (e.g. the caste system) proved, however, to be something of a hindrance to mass conversion. The subcontinent's Turkic rulers also had not sought to reconfigure the demographics of the region through the wholesale import of large numbers of Muslims.

As we enter the modern period, our focus in South Asia shifts to the Moghul Empire (1526-1858), which brought much of present day Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan under a centralized Muslim authority. Turkic, Afghan, and Iranian influences continued to have a strong role, with Persian serving as the language of court and reference point in terms of art and literature. This "regional cosmopolitanism" came to define Mughal Islam and to distinguish it from the narrower concerns of jurisprudential high orthodoxy. In the second half of the Mughal period, however, increased contact with the Middle East by modernist reformers and activists challenged the legacy of religious syncretism in the subcontinent.

Figures such as Shah Walliallah (1702-1763), Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (1786-1831), and Hajji Shari'atallah (1781-1840)—all of whom either studied in or were heavily influenced by revivalist trends emanating from the Middle East (such as the ideas of Arabian puritanist Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab)—argued for the expunging from Indian Islam of Hindu-influenced rituals, tolerance of Shi'ism, and various practices relating to the veneration of Sufi saints, which they regarded as idolatry. This was replaced by an emphasis on basic tenants of faith and a reliance on the core scriptural sources of the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition (Sunna), a development which formed the basis of what eventually developed into a South Asian variant of puritanical modernism in the Ahl-e-Hadith movement.

But Sufism continued to play an important role, as expressed in the Barelwi movement, with the Qadiriyya and Chistiyya orders being particularly prominent. One of the most seminal events in modern South Asian Islam occurred with the founding of the Dar ul-'Ulum seminary at Deoband in 1867. This current, which merged the principles of Islamic revivalism and neo-orthodoxy with elements of Sufism, soon consolidated itself as the leading center of Islamic scholarly production in South Asia, attracting students not only from all over the region but also from the Arab world.

While the Pan-Islam ideology of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) never had much purchase as an anti-colonial movement in South Asia, Ottoman solidarity and support for the Caliph in Istanbul did enter the political formulations of the subcontinent's Muslims through the All-India

[3] Richard M. Eaton (ed.), *India's Islamic Traditions,* 711-1750 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[4] Syed Akbar Hyder, *Reviving Karbala: Martyrdom in South Asian Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Muslim League founded in 1906. Certain Deobandi leaders, such as Mahmoud al-Hasan, were also active in the anti-British movement, seeking to make common cause with the Qajars in Iran, the Ottomans, and Afghanistan, and traveling as far as Mecca to drum up support for an "expanded Caliphate" that would reach beyond the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire to encompass South and Southeast Asia.

It was, however, in opposition to the secular-nationalist formulations of the All-India Muslim League (which came to favor the establishment of an independent homeland for the Muslims of India) that the most prominent of South Asia's Islamist movements was born. Syed Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979) founded the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) in 1941. Maududi was strongly influenced by the ideas of Hassan al-Banna, the founder in 1928 of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) movement in Egypt. Indeed, the ideological affinities between the MB and JI allowed for considerable collaboration between activists and intellectuals in the two movements throughout much of the twentieth century. Although the movement split into two branches with the partition of India and establishment of Pakistan in 1947—the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan and the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) in India—each developed its own tendrils of outreach to the Middle East over the years. With Indian Muslims in the minority and Islamist mobilization to establish a *shari'a*-based state off the table, JIH turned to the Middle East primarily for intellectual and financial support. Through increased labor migration by Indian Muslims to Arab Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, and via the efforts of JIH-affiliated scholars such as Abu'l Hasan 'Ali Nadwi who enjoyed strong ties to leading Islamic universities and also to the Kingdom's religious establishment, the Indian group successfully courted Saudi largesse.[5]

For its own part, the Pakistani JI—whose only meaningful taste of political success came under the tenure of Zia ul-Haq's "Islamization" program in the late 1970s and early 1980s (and even then with only limited impact)—actively cultivated ties to Islamist groups in the Arab world and sought to build a strong base of support within organizations with strong ties to Saudi Arabia, such as the Muslim World League and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth. Both groups drew inspiration from external political events in the Muslim world, such as Mujahideen resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and Iran's Islamic Revolution—with the latter also serving to mobilize the Shi'a of Pakistan.[6] The growth of a significant community of South Asian immigrants in the United Kingdom from the 1960s was also significant, with the ecology of South Asian Islamism replicating itself to some extent in the United Kingdom via organizations such as the UK Islamic Mission, the Islamic Foundation, and the Islamic Forum Europe. A branch of the Jamaat also exists in Bangladesh and its leaders have also similarly cultivated ties to the Middle East and the United Kingdom.

While Deoband is best thought of as a scholarly and theological current, it does also provide the basis for one of the largest transnational Muslim movements to be established in the last century, the Tablighi Jama'at (TJ), first established in India in 1927.[7] Generally regarded as conservative traditionalists, Tablighis take it as their mission to encourage Muslims across the *umma*'s many sub-communities to observe the tenets of faith and practice appropriate forms of

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[5] Irfan Ahmad, "Between Moderation and Radicalization: Transnational Interactions of Jamaat-e-Islami of India," *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* 5, no. 3 (July 2005): 279-299.

[6] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shia and Sunni Identities," *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 3 (1998): 687-716.

[7] Muhammad Khalid Masud, *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000).

worship. Wandering bands of TJ followers are often dispatched on *da'wa* missions by regional offices throughout the world—not seeking primarily to make conversions to Islam, but rather to renew the piety and assure the correct devotional practice of existing Muslims. While the social significance of both pietistic groups and transnational Sufi networks—which also continue to be immensely important in contemporary South Asia—is clear in terms of their breadth, global reach and popularity, scholars differ as to the political significance of such movements.

While the influence of Sufism as a socio-religious force has certainly been integrated into the fabric of South Asian Muslim societies (as alluded to above) the brotherhoods (*tariqat*) rarely take overtly political stances. Rather, they would be more likely to seek to widen their influence by gaining the interest and eventual membership of local leaders and opinion-makers. The TJ, likewise, describes itself as an apolitical organization whose orientation eschews the machinations of power and wealth. The vast majority of its followers hold to this ethos. There have nonetheless been instances in which followers on the margins of TJ have become involved with political activists organized through the religious seminaries (mainly in South Asia) in which TJ's religious conservatism was initially articulated. Others have argued that while most Tablighi followers may not themselves become involved in politics, the work they perform in terms of heightening religious consciousness can often serve to "prime" the way for Islamists to emerge.[8] The founder of TJ, Muhammad Ilyas, was himself a great admirer of Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi and understood his Tablighi work to complement that of the Islamists.

The influx into South Asia of more overtly militarized Islamist currents from the Middle East can be traced to the war in Afghanistan (1980-88).

The influx into South Asia of more overtly militarized Islamist currents from the Middle East can be traced to the war in Afghanistan (1980-88). During this period, tens of thousands of fighters from the Middle East—often referred to as the "Arab Afghans"—journeyed to the region to wage war against the Soviets. With the complicity and eventually the active support of the Pakistani security services (not to mention Saudi Arabia and the United States), these groups came to constitute a major presence in the northern tribal areas of Pakistan, particularly around cities such as the "*jihad* boom town" of Peshawar and its cognate in the Kashmiri capital, Muzafarabad. After the Soviet withdrawal, the remnants of this force went in search of other causes, sometimes finding them relatively close by, such as in the case of the Kashmir conflict, or, as with Usama Bin Laden's Al-Qa'ida, developing visions of a wider global war against Muslim oppression. The Middle East, particularly Yemen, Sudan, and the UAE, served as an important resource base for Al-Qai'da, with Bin Laden joining forces with the Taliban—a post-*mujahideen* militant movement in Afghanistan—in the late 1990s.

The History of Transnational Islam in Southeast Asia

While there was likely some contact with Southeast Asia on the part of Arab traders in the very early years of Islam, the origins of the religion in this region trace back to the time of the oceanic

[8] Yoginder Sikand, "The Tablighi Jama'at and Politics: A Critical Re-Appraisal," *The Muslim World 96*, no. 1 (January 2006): 175-195.

trading system described above. Although details are scarce, it appears that from the thirteenth century, Muslim merchants from various parts of South Asia and the Middle East—with Gujarat and Yemen being particularly important—began to travel and trade regularly in the Malay archipelagos. China was another important source, with at least one of the nine famous Walis who brought Islam to Java hailing from China. While some explorers reported the presence of Muslim communities in areas such as Sumatra (more specifically Samudra-Pasai and Aceh) as early as the late thirteenth-century, the first Muslim polity was established in the region at Malacca in about 1400 when Iskandar Shah embraced Islam. Several other Muslim kingdoms arose in the area in relatively quick succession, bringing Islam to Java, Madura, Surabaya, Pattani (southern Thailand) and eventually to the Moluccas, Borneo and the Philippines. With Portugal taking control of Malacca in the early sixteenth century, many Muslim notables relocated to Sumatra, particularly the northern province of Aceh.

However, it was the island of Java that soon emerged as the cultural heartland of Southeast Asian Islam. Here we saw a process of religious syncretism that intermingled Islam with elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, and local folk tales—much like the South Asian experience described above. Indeed, it is possible to see in the Islamization of Southeast Asia (both historically and in the contemporary era) many of the same patterns that defined vectors of Hinduization and the transmission of Buddhism from India across much of Asia. In this regard, the spread of Islam from the subcontinent is neither new nor unique.

Ties with the Middle East during this period were mainly through two sources, scholarly travel and Sufi networks. Aceh, in particular, maintained relations with both the Ottomans and Mughals, a connection that mostly entailed the provision of religious scholars and some modicum of military assistance in Aceh's struggle against the Portuguese and the Dutch. With regards to Sufism, the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, and Shattariyya orders became strongly entrenched in Malay Muslim society by the seventeenth century. The development of scholarly ties with the Middle East by the early nineteenth century, however, ensured that the revivalist backlash against Sufism did not take long to rear its head in Southeast Asia.[9] This contact with the wider Muslim world also instilled a sense of anti-colonialism as a distinctly Muslim cause in the minds of some Malay Indonesians. Singapore emerged in the nineteenth century as a hub for Islamic modernists and reformers, playing host to a number of influential Muslim periodicals.

This cleavage was to solidify by the later nineteenth and early twentieth century in the formation of two distinct currents in Malay Islam. The *Kaum Tua* ("Older Generation") represented the tradition of religious syncretism and courtly Islam, strongly influenced by Sufism, whereas the *Kaum Muda* ("Younger Generation") were inspired by the revivalist trends coming out of Arabia and India (see above), with young religious scholars who had studied in the Middle East returning to Indonesia and pursuing a project to purify local Islam of all pre-Islamic influences. To some extent these same categories were implicated in the foundation of the two main mass religious movements in Indonesia, the rural-based and traditionalist (e.g. Sufi-oriented) Nahdatul Ulama (est. 1926) and the modernist (e.g. orthodox revivalist) and more urban Muhammadiyah (est. 1912). These two movements today boast a combined membership of some 60 million Indonesian Muslims.[10]

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[9] Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern "Ulama" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004).

[10] Barry Desker, "Islam and Society in South-East Asia after 11 September," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 56, no. 3 (November 2002): 383-394.

Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-e-Islami style Islamism first appeared in Southeast Asia with the founding in 1951 of the Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS). While religious scholars (*'ulama*) have a more prominent role in PAS than in modern Islamist movements elsewhere, the modern professionals who constitute the core of the party's leadership draw strongly on the MB and JI traditions and are well-connected with fellow Islamists in the Arab world, Pakistan, and Indonesia.

While Islamic parties have been part of the Indonesian political landscape since the 1950s, these have not generally been Islam*ist* parties in the sense of advocating religious law, or *shari'a*. With the founding of the Parti Keadilan (now the Parti Keadilan Sejahtera, "Justice & Prosperity Party," PKS) in 1998, a franchise of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology entered Indonesian politics.[11] While many PKS leaders, such as Hidayat Nurwahid, have spent considerable time in the Arab world, it would not be accurate to regard PKS as representing the wholesale transplantation of the MB model into Indonesia. The party's agenda, for the most part, reflects local concerns and demonstrates the same sense of pragmatism that has led to the phenomenal political success of their Turkish namesake, the AKP ("Justice and Development Party"). Indeed, PKS leaders are quite open about their desire to emulate the AKP and have sent party workers on study tours to Turkey to learn from the latter. PKS and PAS have both also been active within the recently established International Forum of Islamist Parliamentarians, a transnational forum that gathers together elected members of national legislative bodies representing Islamist parties from all major regions of the Muslim world.

The political struggles of Muslim minorities in Southeast Asia, most notably in the Philippines and Thailand, have also featured some measure of transnational linkage to the Middle East and South Asia.

The political struggles of Muslim minorities in Southeast Asia, most notably in the Philippines and Thailand, have also featured some measure of transnational linkage to the Middle East and South Asia. In the case of Thailand, for example, young Pattani returning from study in Pakistan, India and Egypt in the 1960s played a leading role in the establishment of both the Islamist-leaning Barisan Revolusi Nasional and the more secular Patani United Liberation Organization.[12] In the Philippines, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has actively courted support in the wider Muslim world for the autonomy of the Muslim community of Mindanao. In addition to taking its case before the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the MNLF in the mid-1970s mobilized government officials from Muslim-majority countries such as Saudi Arabia, Libya and Senegal to intervene on its behalf with then president Ferdinand Marcos. MNLF leaders have also taken sanctuary in the Middle East.[13]

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[11] The Ikhwan current of thought had, however, been present since at least the 1970s on Indonesian university campuses. The Salman Mosque at Bandung Institute of Technology, for example, was an important site for student Islamist agitation in this period. The Dural Islam movement also represented a source of pro-*shari'a* political struggle in Indonesia from the 1940s to 1960s.

[12] Syed Serajul Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 5 (May 1998): 441-456.

[13] Ibid.

Recent years have seen increased interest in the ties between Islamic militants in Southeast Asian and foreign groups such as al-Qa'ida. Some of these relationships go back to the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s when, for example, Philippine jihadists fought alongside the Arab-Afghans. From the early 1990s, Al-Qai'da appears to have built of linkages with regional affiliates in Southeast Asia, including groups such as the Abu Sayyaf group (Philippines) and Jemaah Islamiyya (JI). The latter is most strongly associated with Indonesia and its alleged leader Abu Bakr Basyir, the head of an Islamic school in central Java. JI, which carried out the Bali bombings of 2002, is said to also operate cells in other regional settings such as Malaysia and Singapore.[14] Indonesia has also seen a recent increase in support for another radical Islamist group, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), a movement that originated in the Middle East in the early 1950s. While it publicly eschews the use of violence in favor of "political methods," HT's core goal involves the re-establishment of centralized Muslim political authority in the form of a renewed caliphate.[15]

Cross-regional Vectors of Transnational Islamization

Looking back over and trying to distill some analytical categories from the historical account provided above, it would appear that we can identify three or perhaps four major conduits of transnational Muslim connectivity between South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, as well as several other significant issues that merit keeping in mind—such as the consistent presence and deep social roots of Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqat*) and, more recently, largely apolitical pietistic movements such as the Tablighi Jamaat. These are particularly important groups to consider insofar as they help us to understand some of the ways in which transnational Islam is embedded in everyday life; the significance of scholarly exchange between South/Southeast Asia and the Middle East as a vehicle for the transplantation to Asian contexts of theological currents emanating out of the Arab world (e.g. salafi revivalism); in the twentieth century, the establishment in South/Southeast Asia of a number of modern Islamist movements modeled on the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood (e.g. Jamaat-e-Islami, PAS, PKS); more recently, the appearance of militant Islamist groups with transnational organizational and ideological affinities with Al-Qa'ida.

In addition, we should also consider here the role of new media such as the Internet and satellite television in fostering a greater sense of awareness on the part of South/Southeast Asian Muslims of the issues and challenges that face their co-religionists in other global settings and the potential capacity of the same to generate a renewed sense of *umma* consciousness.[16] Sectarian divisions within Islam are obviously also relevant here, with the region's Shi'i minority fostering transnational ties over centuries. It is worth noting that Husayn Bashir al-Najafi, one of the four Grand Ayatullahs in Najaf (currently the leading world center of Shi'i scholarship), is from the Indian subcontinent. Finally, in addition to the more organized movements and parties mentioned above, we should also consider how some of the more everyday and ritualistic dimensions of Islam may also constitute sites of transnational engagement and influence. One thinks here, for example, of the role of pilgrimage networks and the Hajj in fostering contact and exchange between Muslims from disparate corners of the *umma*.

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[14] Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003).

[15] Greg Fealy, "Hizb ut-Tahrir in Indonesia" in *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West*, Shahram Akbarzadeh and Fethi Mansouri (eds.) (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007).

[16] Peter G. Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Typologies of Muslim Transnationalism in Asia: Movements and Drivers

Having surveyed the broad historical contours of transnational Islam in Asia, we can now go on to take stock of the various forms it assumes in the contemporary region. We conceptualize transnationalism here in two ways: first, by looking at those groups and movements for whom movement and mobilization across nation-state borders is intrinsic to their nature, and second by looking at other forces that enable the transnationalization of Muslims and Islam (e.g. labor migration, global media). This section will hence outline both a broad typology of movements and also identify some of the major driving forces of Muslim transnationalism in Asia. As with all typologies, the categories represented below should be viewed as 'ideal types' rather than as precise descriptions of social reality. Indeed, as the various country case studies that comprise the bulk of this study make abundantly clear, it would be analytically dangerous to assume any sort of "hermetic seal" between the different types of groups. Rather, we often see considerable overlap and cross-fertilization between them, and in some cases individuals will move between different groups, or even participate in several simultaneously.

Groups and Movements

In terms of groups and movements demonstrating a relatively high degree of formal organization, the most important actors within contemporary Muslim transnationalism in Asia fall into the following categories:

Sufi Brotherhoods (tariqat). Islam's mystical orders have operated transnationally for many centuries. While less directly involved in conflict and politics than other movements, Sufism has had an important impact on the general character of Islam and on everyday religious sensibilities across the region. One of the two mass Islamic movements in Indonesia, Nahdatul Ulama (with some 30 million members) is largely Sufi-based.[17] Some authors have also argued that Sufi social structures have played an important role in mediating popular perceptions of the nation-state and its legitimacy in countries such as Pakistan.[18] In South and Southeast Asia some of the more important Sufi orders include the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, Chistiyya (almost exclusively in India), and the Shattariyya—most of which also have a presence in other world regions. The grand shaykh of the Naqshbandiyya, for example, is based in northern Cyprus, but has traveled to Asia to visit followers in the region (many of whom are found in families of the political elite) on several occasions.

Renewalist/pietistic movements.[19] This trend is most clearly represented by the Tablighi Jama'at, a grassroots pietistic social movement derived from the Deoband School of renewalist thought (est. 1867 in India). The Deobandi School is largely confined to South Asia and those areas of the world with large South Asian diasporas (e.g. United Kingdom, South and East Africa). The Tablighi movement, while founded in South Asia, is today found almost everywhere in the world where Muslims are to be found. Primarily concerned with matters of proper religious observance, self-improvement, and the Islamization of society through an emphasis on personal piety, some

[17] Martin van Bruinessen, "Najmuddin al-Kubra, Jumadil Kubra and Jamaluddin al-Akbar: Traces of Kubrawiyya Influence in Early Indonesian Islam," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 150 (1994): 305-329.

[18] Robert Rozehnal, "Origins and Development of the Sufi orders (tarekat) in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika* 1, no. 1(1994):1-23.

[19] The term 'renewalist' here refers to those movements whose intellectual and ideological heritage traces back to late eighteenth century figures such as Shah Wali Ullah (India) and Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (Arabia). They sought to reinvigorate Islam through an emphasis on personal piety, purity, and correct adherence to ritual obligation.

dimensions of Tablighi activity overlap with politics.[20] As the subsequent case studies will show, the Tablighi Jama'at is an important factor in nearly every country within the scope of this study.

Islamist parties/groups. This broad category refers to a wide selection of movements who vary considerably in terms of their political goals and methods. What they share in common is a focus on political change and, more specifically, the establishment of some form of *shariah*-based polity. We can identify three major subgroups here: 1) those groups, such as the Jama'ati Islami in Pakistan or PAS in Malaysia, which accept the framework of the nation-state and pursue their agenda via participation in the political system; 2) groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir which reject the legitimacy of the nation-state system and democracy in favor of a global Islamic polity in the form of a renewed caliphate, but who nonetheless reject the use of violence towards this end; and finally 3) militant radical groups such as al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiya that both reject the political status quo and are prepared to use violence to establish a global *shariah* state.

While the latter two are transnational in terms of their political vision and organization, groups in the first category tend to operate within the confines of a single-nation state. Their transnational dimensions are to be found in the fact that almost all political parties of this sort were founded in the ideological current of Hassan al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt) or Abu'l Ala Mawdudi's Jamaati Islami (Pakistan). The party leaderships are generally well-networked transnationally and while it would be a stretch to claim operational coordination, from e.g. Cairo to Lahore to Jakarta, these mostly nationally-based parties nevertheless share a common worldview with cognate groups in other countries and regions. Under the auspices of the recently-established International Forum of Islamic Parliamentarians, for example, sitting legislators from several of the new generation Islamist parties across several world regions meet regularly to share their experiences.

Charity organizations and modernist da'wa groups.[21] This category again covers the activity of a diverse range of groups, ranging from the Saudi-sponsored propagation work of the Muslim World League[22] to the humanitarian-oriented efforts of organizations such as Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, and the International Islamic Council for Da'wah and Relief.[23] The latter organizations—some of which are based in Europe, others in the Middle East—have played important roles in the aftermath of disasters such as the Indonesian Tsunami and earthquakes in Pakistan. Some have accused the Saudi-funded charities of engaging in proselytization alongside their humanitarian work.

Forces and Drivers

In addition to inventorying the various groups and movements that embody Muslim transnationalism, it is also useful to think about other social and structural forces that provide conduits for Islam and Muslims to cross borders. While some of these drivers of transnational Islam are directly implicated in the activities of the groups outlined above, they also remind us that Muslim transnationalism is not always about groups and movements but rather part and parcel of more mundane and often highly personalized trajectories of education, employment, and ritual observance. Some of the most important of these are:

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[20] Sikand, "The Tablighi Jama'at and Politics: A Critical Re-Appraisal."

[21] The term *da'wa*—which occurs in some analyses in conjunction with pietistic renewalist movements such as the Tablighi Jama'at—here refers to a wide range of modernist, bureaucratic organizations that often serve as proxies for state-led Islamization agendas.

[22] Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der islamischen Weltliga* (Leiden: Brill, 1990).

[23] Jonathon Benthall and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

Scholarly exchange & study abroad. For several centuries students of religious knowledge from points in South and Southeast Asia have traveled within the region and, more commonly, to destinations in the Middle East (such as Cairo and Mecca/Medina) to study at the major Islamic universities. We find accounts, for example, of Indonesians at Al-Azhar University and the impact on local religious dynamics in Southeast Asia of ideas and theologies imported from the Arab world, some of which run against the grain of local religious sensibilities. In more recent years, networks linking students and faculty at institutions such as the International Islamic University of Malaysia and the International Islamic University Islamabad—but also Medina University—have provided important vectors for social mobility.[24]

Labor migration. The petrodollar economies of the Arab Gulf have relied heavily on labor from South and Southeast Asia over the past forty years, ensuring a regular flow of migrants between the regions that numbers well into the millions. The labor migrant experience has important implications for lives and livelihoods on both ends of the sending-receiving dyad.[25] Returning migrants will sometimes bring back some of the religious flavors to which they have been exposed, and the vast and complex logistical ties (air transport, shipping) between the Middle East and South/Southeast Asia ensure a regular flow of peoples, goods, and ideas. There are also significant labor migration vectors within Asia itself that bring, for example, two million Indonesians to Malaysia to work.

New media. Satellite television and the Internet have been associated in recent years with a dramatic reconfiguration of the religious public sphere in the Muslim world.[26] This has entailed an enormous proliferation of voices claiming to speak on behalf of Islam with concomitant impacts on the question of religious authority. Such outlets have also permitted certain figures to operate outside the reach of government media censors. While the Middle East serves as the hub for most Islamic media programming (with significant global broadcast power), Asian voices have also begun to play an important role. One thinks, for example, of the Bombay-based popular preacher Zakir Naik whose satellite station Peace TV is received in South Asia and the Middle East. He also has a significant following among Muslims in the West via the Internet. Pakistani religious teacher Farhat Hashmi has similarly built a wide Internet constituency among middle class South Asians (particularly in the West) for her lectures on women and Islam.

Ritual obligations. Some measure of transnationalism is woven into the very fabric of Islamic religious observance. The mandatory *hajj* pilgrimage sees some two million Muslims from around the world gathering in Mecca and Medina each year, not to mention the hundreds of thousands who travel to Saudi Arabia as pilgrims outside the *hajj* season. As many observers have noted, the experience of *hajj* can have a significant impact on religious worldviews,[27] and can even serve as a staging ground for politics.[28] Devotional sites connected to various saints are also central to the Sufi tradition and visiting them can entail transnational travel.

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[24] Peter Mandaville, *Islamic Universities: Religious Higher Education and Politics in the Muslim World* (Unpublished manuscript, 2007).

[25] Katy Gardner, *Global Migrants, Local Lives: Travel and Transformation in Rural Bangladesh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[26] Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (eds.), *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

[27] Dale F. Eickelman and James P. Piscatori, *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[28] Robert Bianchi, *Guests of God: Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Key Empirical and Conceptual Themes

Having outlined a rough typology and movements and drivers, we move on now to identify the key empirical and conceptual points that define the scope of our analysis. While the thematic and country case studies that comprise the present study vary in terms of their areas of emphasis and overall analytical import, there are a number of common "baseline" empirical questions that all chapters will address. A number of important cross cutting conceptual themes also present themselves albeit with varying levels of direct relevance to each of the cases found in the full study. We will provide an overview and brief discussion of each of these, pointing to the cases where they hold the greatest salience.

Given the diverse range of meanings and significance that can be attached to the concept of 'transnational Islam,' there is first some definitional work to be done in each of our various geographic and thematic settings. We need to be cautious about how we posit transnational Islam as an object of study. There is considerable danger of reification if we simply appear to take for granted the existence of something called transnational Islam separate from the social relations that define it. This would run the risk of granting undue weight and explanatory power to a social force that cannot be properly understood outside an analysis of the circumstances that give rise to it in the first place. Such an approach would therefore resist any line of analysis that declares transnational Islam to be a discrete social agent unto itself. We begin, therefore, in each case with an effort to contextualize Muslim transnationalism and to outline the nature and diversity of the phenomenon in each setting. This will also entail identifying the key actors (groups/movements/individuals) and drivers of transnational Islam from among—but by no means confined to—the typologies outlined above and to explain the division of labor in terms of social function between them. The question of the extent to which various forms of Muslim transnationalism overlap, interact, or exist in dialectical relation to each other also needs some attention.

Transnational Islam is inevitably altered through its encounter with local cultural sensibilities and pre-existing conceptions and practices of religiosity, whether the society in question is Muslim or non-Muslim.

This point about identifying and defining the meaning of transnational Islam in particular contexts also involves challenging the assumption that the arrival or entry into a particular locality of what we are calling Muslim transnationalism necessarily involves the eradication of 'local' Islam and its wholesale replacement by something external. As we have seen from the historical discussion above, the arrival of Islam in, for example, Southeast Asia set in motion complex processes of adaptation and metamorphosis. Transnational Islam is inevitably altered through its encounter with local cultural sensibilities and pre-existing conceptions and practices of religiosity, whether the society in question is Muslim or non-Muslim. What we see therefore is

something much more akin to the "glocalization"[29] of Islam, implying complex interplay between transnational influences and the society and settings into which they enter. This is an important point to bear in mind when we consider, for example, the role of religious trends emanating from the Arab world in the Asian region. Mosque-building efforts sponsored by Saudi *da'wa* or charity organizations do not automatically turn into channels for the unexamined import of strict and puritanical Wahhabi sensibilities. Rather, such external influences inevitably engage and negotiate with—and are in turn to some extent reshaped by—the social and religious environment into which they enter.

The temporality of transnational Islam is important to consider when trying to make some assessment as to whether we are dealing with a wholly new phenomenon, or whether contemporary Muslim transnationalism can be said to relate to pre-existing forms of the same—or to historical forms of social relations that predate the formation of distinct groups and movements. The two mass Muslim movements in Indonesia, for example, Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, do not themselves engage in significant transnational activity but their formation can to some extent be seen in terms of varying orientations towards reformist and revivalist trends emanating from the Middle East from the late nineteenth century. Similarly, even where contemporary ties between subregions of South Asia and Malaysia occur under the auspices of particular groups or ideological trends, they can also be seen as the continuation of commercial ties that date back many centuries (*see above*). Further, in addition to considering lines of temporal continuity in transnational Islam, what about instances of rupture? Can we identify instances where a particular trend or group whose activity was previously contained exclusively within national borders shifted to a transnational orientation? Or, conversely, examples of transnational movements that at some points ceased to operate across borders?

The spatiality of transnational Islam in particular settings also merits our attention. In each case, therefore, we will need to elaborate the relevant geography of Muslim transnationalism. Looking at this issue with greater resolution and granularity, it quickly becomes clear that in some cases what we are terming transnationalism is actually something far more precise involving ties (of commerce, devotional activity, labor migration, etc.) between, and often limited to, very specific points in two or more countries—a phenomenon perhaps better captured under the rubric of *translocality*.[30] Elsewhere, the phenomena of migration and diaspora mean that the geographies of social, political, and religious influence around a particular country can entail the involvement of unexpected and counterintuitive locales. The dynamics around the 1988-89 Satanic Verses affair and the more recent Danish Cartoon crisis, for example, illustrate the importance of transnational religious ties between Pakistan, Bangladesh and South Asian populations living in the United Kingdom.

Indeed, while the geographic scope of the present study is defined in terms of transnational Islam in South and Southeast Asia, a full understanding of the extent and significance of these linkages can only be achieved by looking at vectors of connectivity that extend well beyond those immediate regions. Asian diasporas in the West and the Middle East are of vital importance, as are political movements and theological trends emanating from the latter. When thinking about the practical implications of dealing with—and, looking ahead to our final section, making policy in—a world of such interdependent geographies, one might think in terms of 'global acupuncture.'

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[29] Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in *Global Modernities*, Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (eds.) (London: Sage, 1995).

[30] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

With this image we seek to capture the idea that having an impact on certain Islamist dynamics in Pakistan may well involve interventions with Jama'at-i Islami legacy groups in London and Leicester in the United Kingdom.

Beyond these core empirical touchpoints relating to—in short—the who, what, where, how, and why of transnational Islam, there are a number of important conceptual issues entailed in the analysis of Muslim transnationalism. While they do not all have equal bearing in each of the country cases and thematic spaces visited by the study, it would be worthwhile for us to briefly map these out by way of orienting the reader to the full range of conceptual issues and challenges posed by the study of transnational Islam.

Non-religious Dimensions of Transnational Islam

First of all, we need to appreciate the fact that transnational "Islam" is not always about religion. Sometimes we are dealing with situations in which religious vocabularies and modes of expression overlap with and articulate phenomena that are actually better understood through the study of culture, social structures, and political economy. For example, when and to what extent can we understand an individual's preference for participation in a transnational Muslim movement as indicator of the weakness or incompleteness of nation-state projects? Likewise, the pursuit of social justice framed in Islamic terms can sometimes be understood as a response to prevailing socioeconomic conditions and the effects of globalization. Islamist groups in Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia, for example, have often been most successful at the ballot box when they associate themselves with efforts to undermine corruption and improve the delivery of basic social services. To better understand these phenomena we would want to ask why and under what circumstances Islam comes to constitute the relevant lexicon of affiliation, aspiration, or resistance.

A related point, and one that has already been touched on above, pertains to the need to distinguish between transnational Islam that takes the form of movements and groups that are inherently transnational in terms of their modes of organization or normative vision (e.g. the Tablighi Jama'at and Hizb ut-Tahrir), and transnational Islam represented by the transnationalization of Muslims and Muslim ideas through e.g. labor migration and the circulation of particular texts or aspirational discourses (the *umma*).

Likewise, we would also want to consider to what extent transnational Muslim circuits are sometimes used by actors and agendas whose primary motives lie outside the realm of religion. For example, insofar as the Tablighi Jama'at operates an alternative infrastructure for travel and transportation in some of the countries in which it operates, and given that barriers to temporary participation in the movement are relatively low, the Jama'at potentially becomes a vehicle that might be appropriated by a diverse range of social and political actors. The practical implications of this possibility are also found in the realm of policy analysis insofar as it requires that we refrain from drawing a direct equivalence between the political agendas and behaviors associated with the informal infrastructures and organizational tendrils of certain kinds of groups with the ideological orientation of the group as a whole. Rather, certain kinds of movements need to be seen as just that: groups whose resources and network formations are eminently subject to appropriation by diverse agendas whose root source lies elsewhere.

While this study is framed in terms of transnational Islam in South and Southeast Asia, we would do well to note that it could equally have focused on transnational Christianity in the same region. In other words, we have to be careful not to assume that Islam is uniquely transnational in

the realm of religion. Other faith traditions in the region—such as Christianity[31] and Hinduism[32]—are today exhibiting similar transnational characteristics. Indeed, their activity has an important impact on the dynamics of Muslim transnationalism. The activities of Laskar Jihad in Indonesia, for example, cannot be fully understood without considering the role of the Christian militia Laskar Christus. This point also speaks to the fact that the transnational dimensions of Islam in any given country are inevitably part of a wider "religious field." Bearing in mind the point raised above about the glocalization of Islam, we would want to ask whether Muslim transnationalism can be said to play any particular functional or symbolic roles within this wider religious field.

Another set of conceptual concerns can be related to the typology of movement and groups types outlined above and the question we have already raised about the extent to which it corresponds to social reality. To what extent and under what conditions do we see overlap, cross-fertilization, and movement between these movement/group types, and when does transnational Islam resist such typologization altogether? Also, while some groups and movements correspond more or less consistently to a particular theological space or political agenda, we frequently see groups and individuals that move back and forth between disparate methods and forms of activism—or which pursue their agendas via multiple means simultaneously. Under what conditions does this occur and how can we account for this variation?

The answer lies in part in the analysis of the ambient social and political environment inhabited by such actors, and issues (some of which we explore below) such as the various state responses to Islamic movements and their transnational relationships. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, for example, can be described accurately as a religious group, a militant formation, a political party, and a charitable organization, but no single one of these labels captures the entirety of the movement (likewise the problem with describing HAMAS or Hizbullah exclusively in terms of terrorism, a tactic). Rather—and this point undoubtedly becomes relevant when analyzing some of the groups in South and Southeast Asia that inhabit the fringes of jihadist activities—it is possible to identify certain pivotal moments (changing political opportunity structures, leadership changes, periods of state repression) that widen the repertoire of potential pathways and modes of activism. Such moments are almost always, as in the case of the various neo-jihadist formations in Indonesia in the early 2000s, accompanied by internal deliberation, contestation, and dissent—ensuring that at the very moment a particular course of action is decided upon, the seeds of alternatives have already been sown.

It is also common in such analytical typologies to map groups and movements onto particular qualitative categories (e.g. modernist vs. traditionalist or quietist vs. activist). Again, when we look at reality on the ground, these easy distinctions break down quite quickly as we inevitable identify elements of the "modern" within the "traditional," and vice versa. Finally, we need to consider correlations between membership in particular groups and wider social structures. Can we see, for example, any correspondence between social class and the groups and movements with which people associate? Likewise, within those movements that cut across (or reconfigure?) class boundaries—such as the Tablighi Jama'at—how should we think about class dynamics and social differentiation *within* the movements themselves?

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31 Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

32 Arvind Rajagopal, "Transnational Networks and Hindu Nationalism," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 29, no. 3 (1997): 45-58.

Conclusion: Policy Implications of Transnational Islam

In this final section we will give some consideration to the practical policy implications of transnational Islam in South and Southeast Asia. These bear on a range of issues—including security and conflict, social cohesion, and political stability. In many cases, as we will see, the policy aspects flow quite directly from the conceptual concerns rehearsed above. Specific policy considerations will obviously vary between country settings, but there are several cross-cutting issues and areas of concern they all share in common, and these will form the basis of our discussion in this concluding section.

First of all, we would want to consider the impact of transnational Islam on conflict and security dynamics in particular countries. A number of countries in the region have seen increased episodes of violent conflict (often with a sectarian or intercommunal dimension), terrorism, or ongoing irredentist dispute. In a number of these cases, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, transnational Muslim movements appear to be playing a significant role. How can we best characterize the impact on conflict dynamics when these groups become implicated? Are there clear patterns relating to, for example, conflict escalation or de-escalation that can be discerned?

Beyond the confines of particular countries' cases, we would also want to ask what regional and extra-regional (extending to global-systemic) effects can be attributed to transnational Islam. In the case of the Philippines, for example, the appearance on the scene of groups and "conflict entrepreneurs" with links to Al-Qaeda have served to escalate the dispute in the southern islands in at least two important respects: first, by linking the cause of Muslims in the Philippines with global Islamic struggles, such actors function as ideological "force multipliers" that dis-embed the conflict from its local context and make it increasingly difficult to achieve a resolution defined exclusively along the horizon of the nation; second, the network tendrils that accompany such actors can raise the material stakes of the conflict by providing a conduit to resources and material that would otherwise have been unavailable to irredentist forces. But the impact of such transnational linkages is not limited only to escalation. In the case of unrest in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan and along the Afghanistan border, interventions from leading religious scholars in the Middle East—such as Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi—have sought to exceptionalize the circumstances under which violence in the name of Islam is permitted.

With regard to the conduct of politics more generally, there is the question of the extent to which transnational Islam has played a role in domestic and local politics, either by emerging as a contentious issue or, more directly, as a source of resources and ideas drawn upon by local politicians. In some cases the impact on social cohesion more broadly will be significant, particularly with regard to dynamics between religious minorities and the majority, or around sectarian cleavages. We also need to consider how the central state, regional/local governments and wider civil society groups (including non-Muslims) in various countries have responded to transnational Islam and what impact these responses have had on the social and political dynamics around Muslim transnationalism. Has transnational Islam generally been framed as an external threat or unwelcome intervention in domestic affairs? Have law enforcement and security forces targeted transnational groups directly? Do the forces of transnational Islam directly challenge or confront the general policy trajectory of national development agendas of particular countries?

In other words, we want to try and get a handle on the policy implications *of* policy responses to transnational Islam. For example, it is clear that in the handling of Abu Bakar Basyir in the aftermath of the Bali bombings, the Indonesian government had to tread a careful line between

policing this scholar's complex web of transnational affiliations while recognizing when too heavy-handed an approach would run the risk of incurring the displeasure of those at home for whom Basyir was primarily a highly respectable local religious figure. In Pakistan, Musharraf had to balance commitment to the U.S.-led global war on terror (and the hardline anti-militant stance that Washington expected of him) with the challenge of keeping sizeable portions of the country under governmental control.

Indeed, the broader question of the impact of global politics more generally is highly relevant when assessing the role of transnational Islam in conflict situations and in domestic politics. The U.S. led global war on terror and, more specifically, the war in Iraq has provided some of the same "conflict entrepreneurs" mentioned above with a useful set of rhetorical tools to inflame local sensibilities and to portray relatively parochial disputes as manifestations of wider anti-imperial struggles—particularly (such as the cases of Indonesia, Pakistan, and the Philippines) where the national governments in question have aligned their own positions with that of the United States.

This point also raises the question of the relative success enjoyed by certain Islamic groups in challenging government legitimacy, particularly where discourses of justice and reform articulate closely with popular concerns about corruption and authoritarian rule. In today's media-saturated environments, the "seduction" of the electorate is often more important and effective than either substantive discussion of policy or coercive, strong-arm tactics. To what extent, we need to ask, does transnational Islam figure—directly or indirectly—in the capacity of particular (perhaps but not necessarily Islamist) parties and social forces to successfully question the legitimacy of existing governments, and what enables such movements to sometimes be more savvy players in the court of public opinion and in media arenas?

We also need to bear in mind the geopolitical dimensions of this same effect. So far much of our discussion has focused on non-governmental groups and movements. There is also the role of state-sponsored Muslim transnationalism to be considered here. In some cases, states vying for religious influence (or, more likely, political influence via religion) in societies beyond their boundaries will co-opt or deploy some of the non-governmental entities (such as *da'wa* groups and charities) that we have already discussed. In some cases, however, their role is more direct—usually in the form of "soft power" contributions via scholarships to study in the Middle East, or broader public diplomacy initiatives aimed at building popular support that can be leveraged geopolitically.

We might view some of Iran's recent activity in Southeast Asia in this light. Where the 1979 Iranian Revolution already built a bedrock of Third Worldist and subaltern sympathy in the context of the Cold War, Tehran's recent overtures have sought to remobilize this solidarity in the name of anti-hegemonic concerns—but often in vary subtle ways. So we find Iran, for example, opening cultural centers at universities in Southeast Asia that focus not on the revolutionary rhetoric of Khomeini but rather on Persian contributions to philosophy and Sufism, a focus far more in tune with local religious sensibilities.

There is also the example of the recent political success of the "new Islamist," or "Muslim democracy" trend to consider. This approach is most clearly embodied in the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, and Southeast Asian variants of it can be found in the Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS) in Indonesia and even to some extent in Anwar Ibrahim's Keadilian (Justice) apparatus in Malaysia. It is noteworthy that the various political parties pursuing this pragmatic, "light" Islamism from North Africa across to Asia have mobilized behind a banner that combines social justice with economic development. To this end they are seen to provide a

space of political participation that allows Muslims and Islamically-inclined political actors to "level the playing field." The fortunes of the Muslim democracy trend will constitute an important bellwether of the extent to which political formations based on a new synthesis of Islam, anti-corruption/authoritarianism and socioeconomic enfranchisement can serve as effective spaces to aggregate and deploy (in a mostly democratic fashion) the discontent of Muslim communities in the region.

Above all, what comes out of this study is a portrait of the diversity of transnational Islam. It is a phenomenon that thoroughly resists easy typification or the pronouncement of a definitive set of conclusions regarding its social, political, and security impact. That said, and as will become clear from the country case studies to follow, there are clear regional and subregional differences that can be identified, as well as certain patterns of similarity across disparate and far flung national settings that nevertheless share similar social and political environments.

As globalization processes progress in the coming years, and as the intensity of cross-border social networking in the region increases, so will the salience of transnational Islam. As these very same processes work to embed Muslim transnationalism within the societies of South and Southeast Asia, however, it is also the case that, analytically speaking, it will become increasingly difficult to identify transnational Islam as a discrete phenomenon unto itself, separate from "national" or "local" Islam.

Instead, we should expect ever greater intermingling of global and local dynamics across the domains of religion, politics, and security. In the realms of policymaking and analysis, this will necessarily entail a reconfiguration of conventional assumptions about the borders and limits of particular policy "spaces" (province, nation, region) and the extent to which events "here" can have important determinative effects "there"—even on a global scale. And, perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, in a context in which many policy actors feel compelled to seek greater understanding of Islam and Muslims in order to comprehend worldviews and behaviors in strategically significant countries, there is a need to resist deploying religion as a primary (or uniquely ascriptive) category of analysis—since Islam, frequently, functions as a political vocabulary for the expression of grievances and aspirations whose sources are commonly found in the mundane circumstances of everyday life.

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Islamist Networks and Mainstream Politics in South and Southeast Asia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper assesses the role of transnational Islamist networks in South and Southeast Asia, paying particular attention to their impact on questions of religious and national identity throughout these regions. The paper argues that much of the current concern over Islamist politics in Asia is due to the mistaken assumption that religion has played a secondary role in the development of Asian society, and that much of what has determined the nation-building process in South and Southeast Asia has been the prerogatives of developmentalism and nationalism. Understanding the development and spread of religio-political networks across South and Southeast Asia today has to take into consideration the long historical precedent that laid the ground for the fertile development of religious-based politics currently underway in the region.

MAIN FINDINGS

While globalization processes have not invented pan-Islamic networks, they have aided their development. The result has been the creation of an increasingly well-connected global Islamic space that baffles the governmentality of nation-builders who are used to mainstream national politics with identifiable mainstream national actors and agents. Islamist networks throughout Asia have profited from this crisis of governmentality in many ways. They have assumed the mantle of the new anti-globalisation forces which was once the elected space of the nationalists. Islamists long to create a global pan-Islamic space where belonging to the same faith community is the only passport one needs to travel across the Muslim world unrestricted and remain comfortable in the safe confines of a Muslim universe. Though the Islamist project is sometimes couched in aggressive, if not militarist, terms of conquest and expansion, the yearning is fundamentally a mundane one. The history of South and Southeast Asia demonstrates that religious-based mobilization has been one of the most effective tools for gathering public support and ensuring public consensus for a range of political projects, the chief of which was the mobilization of Asians against colonial rule.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Understanding the shift wherein the Islamist voices have come closer to the center stage of national politics in many Muslim countries means taking into consideration how and why globalization has actually helped to weaken the credibility and standing of the older generation of statist, developmentalist-oriented national leaders and ruling elite.
- Should the networking process of transnational Islamist groups embed itself to the point where it presents communities with new notions of identity (such as that of the universal Muslim subject), then the very notion of what constitutes a political mainstream itself may be undermined, questioned, or eroded.
- The network capabilities of Islamist groups will have serious implications on the national politics and mainstream public domain in their respective countries. Looking at how the localized conflicts in areas like southern Thailand, Kashmir, and the southern Philippines have now been elevated to the global level, it is vital to identify the workings of the globalization process and how such global networks have created this common pan-Islamic terrain with a unitary geography and real-time correspondence that does not recognize or stop at the frontiers of established nation-states.

Historical Continuities and New Modalities

That there exist numerous networks of religious-based political and pseudo-political movements and organizations across South and Southeast Asia today should not strike anyone by surprise. Much of the concern that has been raised of late over the appearance of religiously-inspired politics in Asia is due to the mistaken assumption that religion has played a largely passive or secondary role in the development of Asian society since the end of colonial rule and that much of what has guided and determined the nation-building process in South and Southeast Asia has been the prerogatives of good governance, developmentalism and nationalism.

Yet a quick historical survey of the development of South and Southeast Asia would show very clearly that the spread of religion and the development of the respective political cultures of all these societies (which, by the 20th century adapted and developed the frameworks of modern nation-states) went hand-in-hand. Early South Asian notions and values of governance were shaped by the dominant religious belief and value systems of the Indian people, with much of Indian political culture determined by religio-ethnic tenets of the Vedantic faith. Likewise the spread of Indianized culture to Southeast Asia (both mainland and maritime) brought with it not only Indian aesthetics and value-systems but also the vocabulary and ideology of kingship and governance, shaping the political culture of many Southeast Asian countries until today.[33]

By the 13th century the spread of Islam across South and Southeast Asia merely added another layer of religio-political semantics and semiotics on what was already a number of polities where the relationship between religion, politics and governance was an intimate one. By the late 19th century Islam was certainly a potent and visible force in many predominantly Muslim countries across the Arab world and Asia. As noted by Kramer, it was Islam that served as the basis for what later became the nascent anti-colonial movement across the Muslim world as well as the subject for long-extended and widely-disseminated debates on modernization and reform all over the Muslim world.[34]

Yet, the mobilization of Muslims worldwide on the basis of a global sense of Muslim identity and shared values was neither new nor unique, for similar developments were taking place among the Christians, Hindus and Buddhists of Asia. The work of Lubeck and Britts has shown that religious-based mobilization was not confined to Asia either, for similar developments were also taking place in other parts of the world, such as east Africa. Pious activists shared the same political objectives: the mobilization of the masses, the gathering of in-group members of the same faith community, the development of political movements and the creation of a political economy of faith-based politics. These objectives were often combined with transnational ambitions.[35]

Understanding the development and spread of religio-political networks across South and Southeast Asia today, therefore, has to take into consideration the long historical precedent that

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[33] As testified by the fact that the very word for "government" in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Thailand is derivative of the Indian-Hindu notion of divine kingship, *kerajaan*.

[34] Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congress* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[35] Paul Lubeck, *Islam and Urban Labour in Northern Nigeria: The Making of a Muslim Working Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Paul M. Lubeck and Bryana Britts, "Muslim Civil Society and Urban Public Spaces: Globalization, Discursive Shifts and Social Movements," in *Urban Studies: Contemporary and Future Perspectives*, eds. J. Eade and C. Mele (London: Blackwell, 2001).

laid the ground for the fertile development of religious-based politics as we are witnessing in the region at the present. The rise of Christian politics in the Philippines, Hindu politics in India, Buddhist politics in Thailand and Sri Lanka, Islamism in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia can only be understood against such a broad historical background which paved the way for the inculcation of religious values and ideas into the socio-cultural milieu of the region, where religion has never been seen as a stranger to politics and the conduct of governance in the public domain.[36]

The first premise that has to be set therefore is this: That despite the adoption of modern notions and values associated with the modern nation-state, most postcolonial Asian states have really been engaged in a process of grafting and bricolage where modern concepts and values such as constitutionalism, the rule of law, citizenship, etc., have merely been grafted upon a socio-political environment that was never secular (understood in the French meaning of the word *Laicite*) in the first place. The rise of religious politics in Asia is therefore neither an anomaly nor a novel phenomenon that needs explanation for Asians themselves.

The history of Southeast Asia would demonstrate that religious-based mobilization was the most effective tool for the gathering of public support and ensuring public consensus for a range of political projects…

Religious Mobilization and Networks: Return to a Pre-Modern Globalized Space

The history of 21st century Asian politics demonstrates the effectiveness of religious-based political mobilization to an entire generation of Asian political actors and agents. The history of Southeast Asia would demonstrate that religious-based mobilization was the most effective tool for the gathering of public support and ensuring public consensus for a range of political projects, the chief of which was the mobilization of Asians against colonial rule.

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[36] There exist numerous works written by scholars who have focused on the development of political Islam or Islamism to date. Undoubtedly the best study of the historical development of the Jama'at-e Islami party of Pakistan (with its links and chapters to the Jama'at-e Islami of India and Bangladesh) is Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994). On the development of the *Taliban* that began along the borders of Pakistan-Afghanistan, see Ahmad Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2001). On the development of the Deobandi school of thought in India and its development into a movement with political ambitions, see Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); and Barbara D. Metcalf, *Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis and Talibs*, ISIM Papers IV (Leiden: International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), 2002).

For the development of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), see Farish A. Noor, *Islam Embedded: The Historical Development of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party PAS, 1951-2003* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute (MSRI), 2004). The best study on the development of the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM) remains the one by Muhammad Nor Monutty, *Perceptions of Social Change in Contemporary Malaysia: A Critical Analysis of ABIM's Role and Impact on Muslim Youth* (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1988. unpublished). See also *Revival of Islam in Malaysia: The Role of ABIM* (Kuala Lumpur: Angkata Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), 1974). For further studies on the development of political Islam in Malaysia during the 1970s to the 1980s, see Chandra Muzaffar "Islamic Resurgence: A Global View," in *Islam and Society in Southeast Asia*, eds. Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), 1986); Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Fajar Bakti Press, 1987); and Judith Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984). A detailed comparison of the impact of the Iranian revolution on the development of Islamist movements of Southeast Asia can be found at: Fred R. von der Mehden, "Malaysian and Indonesian Islamic Movements and the Iranian Connection" in *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact*, ed. John Esposito, (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990).

In the cases of Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, the emergence of early proto-nationalist thought came hand-in-hand with the development of new religio-political identities and movements. The rise of modern Buddhist activism in Burma was one of the catalysts that mobilized the Burmese intellectual classes against British rule since the late 19th century; and similar developments are to be found in the case of rising Malay-Muslim consciousness in British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. The fact that many of the early pioneers of the anti-colonial movement were Muslim reformers who were captivated and inspired by the reformist zeal of fellow Muslim modernizers in India, Egypt and the Arab lands suggests that religion has indeed been a mobilizing factor in the development of political awareness. This is further bolstered by the fact that among the first anti-colonial movements in the region, many of them were clearly identified by their sectarian, Muslim membership and Islamist leanings such as the *Sarekat* Islam of Indonesia.

The work of Benda is instructive in this respect. He has noted how the rise of nationalism and Islamism in Indonesia during the mid-colonial era leading to the Second World War went hand-in-hand. Benda has also observed how the Islamists of Indonesia played a crucial role in first mobilizing the Indonesian Muslim commercial groups on the basis of class solidarity and later went on to create the first anti-colonial movements on the basis of a shared ethnic-religious solidarity.[37] From the outset these Islamist groups combined both the goals of anti-colonialism with the broader vision of a global—and politically mobilized and active—Muslim *Ummah*, prompting organizations like the *Sarekat Islam* to spread its wings across the South China Sea and open up branches in neighboring states like British Malaya.[38]

Developments in Southeast Asia were matched by similar developments in South Asia, with groups like the Muslim League of India opening up chapters and branches all across the Indian subcontinent and eliciting support from the Indian-Muslim diaspora in other places such as Penang, Malacca and Singapore (which were then under British rule and grouped together as the British Straits Settlements).[39] Nasr notes that in the case of the Jama'at-e Islami—arguably the most important and well-known of the Islamist political movements of South Asia—the same historical trajectory can be seen: What began as a movement for Muslim solidarity later joined forces with Indian nationalists (including the Congress Party of India and the Muslim League), to later emerge on its own as the subcontinent's first and foremost Islamist political movement with a clearly defined Islamist agenda.[40]

Even after the partition between India and Pakistan, and the migration of many of the Jama'at's leaders to Pakistan, the Jama'at-e Islami continued in its efforts to defend and promote Muslim political, economic, educational and cultural interests in both India and Pakistan, albeit according to the modalities that were available as defined by the very different political circumstances they faced in the two countries. This continued well after the conflict between East and West Pakistan in 1971 and the creation of the state of Bangladesh, where the Jama'at still operates. Furthermore,

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37 Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under Japanese Occupation 1942–1945* (Leiden: Fouris, 1983, orig. publ. 1958).

38 See: Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, "Sarekat Islam di Trengganu," *Malaysia in History* XX, no. 11 (1972).

39 The Muslim League of India actually influenced and inspired the creation of the Muslim League of Malaya, which later developed into a political force by the 1960s and eventually culminated in the creation of the *Kesatuan India Muslim Malaysia* (KIMMA, also known as *Kongres India Muslim Malaysia*) which was formed in 1979 in Penang.

40 Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution*.

as was demonstrated after the victories of the Jama'at-e Islami at the elections in Pakistan and Bangladesh in recent years, this transnational mode of cooperation persists to the present.

The emergence and development of these religio-political movements—that later turned and developed into fully-fledged social movements, nationalist organizations and political parties—serves as the starting point for any enquiry into the networks of religio-political movements in Asia today. It is imperative that some historical depth is established to provide the background for our analysis of the global network of Islamist movements today, as well as to underscore the fact that these movements are neither new nor revolutionary.

If, for instance, the Jama'at-e Islami party of Pakistan is presently well-connected to the Pan-Malaysian Islamic party of Malaysia (PAS), this is explained by the simple fact that since the mid-19th century Malay-Muslim scholars and activists had already been traveling across the Indian Ocean to pursue their studies in what was then British India, and that for generations these bonds of itinerant scholar-activists have been maintained on both sides of the geographical divide. Our own research into the long-established and intimate connections between the network of itinerant missionaries of the Tablighi Jama'at, the scholars of the Deobandi school, and the movement and circulation of Indian and Malay-Muslim diaspora communities across the Indian ocean has led us to the conclusion that the overlap and cooperation between Islamist political parties like the Jama'at-e Islami and PAS is just one facet of a myriad of networks that have been in existence at least from the late 19th century.[41]

Therefore, there is a need to map out the world of these itinerant religious scholar-activists and to chart out the vast assembly of competing and overlapping networks that bring together the diverse global "worlds" of groups such as the Tablighi Jama'at (itinerant scholar-missionaries), Sufi networks, political networks as well as traders' networks. Much of the research that has been done thus far has tended to focus on specific groups and networks (such as the Tabligh) for instance, while overlooking the fact that specific networks may actually overlap and interpenetrate as well, thereby creating three-dimensional network systems that need to be mapped out three-dimensionally.

It is crucial at this stage of our enquiry to look at how the members of the Tabligh movement also overlap with and join other itinerant networks such as those of Islamist political parties, and how one network may lend both logistical support as well as manpower to other networks. Our own research on the Tablighi Jama'at movement in Malaysia and Indonesia has shown that many members of the Tabligh movement double as active party supporters and members of the respective Islamist parties of both countries.[42] Similar, anecdotal[43] observations have been made about the membership of the new Islamist organizations and parties of Indonesia, such as the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) whose membership seems to be drawn mainly from the urban-based university and college educated lower middle classes who also happen to be members of urban-based pietist movements like the Tablighi Jama'at and urban Sufi study circles and networks.

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41 See Farish A. Noor, *Salafiyya Purists in the land of Shadow Puppets and Hindu Temples: The Tablighi Jama'at in Indonesia* (paper for the Wissenschaftliche Konferenz zur gegenwartsbezogenen Forchung im Vorderen Orient (DAVO Congress), Hamburg, November 20-22, 2003); and, "Pathans to the East! The Historical Development of the Tablighi Jama'at movement in Kelantan, Trengganu and Patani and its transnational links with the South Asia and the Global Islamist Revivalist Movement," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 1 (2007).

42 Ibid.

43 It has to be stressed here that this view is entirely based on the interviews and meetings done by the author during his numerous field research trips to Indonesia from 2003 to 2008. At present there has been no systematic study on the membership profile of the PKS, though in many of our meetings and interviews with PKS party members we were struck by the number of them who were also members, or had been members of, the Tablighi Jama'at movement.

> The fact is that all of us face a new historical situation every day. States, organizations, cultures, movements, even civilizations that are most successful are those that can manage, direct, guide, influence, anticipate, manipulate and control the forces of change.[44]

> At a moment when the post-colonial nation-state has lost innumerable sovereign powers to neo-liberal global restructuring, Islamism has seized the popular imagination by capturing the mantle of anti-imperialist, populist nationalism in most Muslim majority states.[45]

Religio-political networks present an ambiguous challenge for theorists of capital-driven globalization today as we still do not fully understand how and why this global network system is sustained by what appears to be faith primarily. Understanding the motivating drivers behind religiously-inspired political mobilization and networking therefore throws up counter-factual examples of a parallel globalization at work that may force us to reconsider some of the more staid premises of globalization theory thus far. For we still have not answered the basic question: "Why do these networks exist and why do people—members of the respective global faith communities—join them?"[46]

There are, presently, a plethora of Islamist organizations and mass movements who have taken the notion of the global caliphate as their goal. Groups like the Hizb ut-Tahrir openly proclaim their vision of a pan-Islamic world; while mainstream Islamist parties ranging from the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul Muslimin*) of Egypt and the Arab world to the Jama'at-e Islami of South Asia to the Pan-Malaysian Islamic party of Malaysia have also spread their networks and contacts beyond the host countries where they first emerged. International conferences bring together Islamists from all corners of the globe with the frequency we associate more with international governmental or business conferences; and the Internet has already created a virtual Islamoscape where Islamists from every country on the planet may interact simultaneously in real time. In many respects, such a global pan-Islamic universe already exists, and it can be said that the pan-Islamic world is a virtual empire where the sun never sets.

Yet looking beyond the narrow concerns of securocrats obsessed with the threat of Islamic terrorism, we need to peer beneath the discursive carapace of this grand project and understand its true import and what it hopes to achieve.

The current author, in his discussions with Islamists from Pakistan to Indonesia, has been struck by the common appeal of them all: They long to create a global pan-Islamic space where belonging to the same faith community is the only passport one needs to travel across the Muslim world unrestricted. In many respects, this is reminiscent of the travels of Ibn Battuta, the celebrated Muslim traveler whose journeys took him across Africa and all the way to Southeast Asia and beyond. Ibn Battuta was, of course a bad traveler and a fussy tourist who insisted all the time that he be served *halal* food and live in comfortable familiar surroundings that did not offend or contradict his Muslim sensibilities. What he sought then, and what Islamists today seek, are the

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[44] Kalim Siddiqui, *Stages of the Islamic Revolution* (London: Open Press, 1996), 2.

[45] Lubeck and Britts, "Muslim Civil Society and Urban Public Spaces: Globalization, Discursive Shifts and Social Movements," 45.

[46] That such talk of a pan-Islamic global project would spook the technocrats and securocrats of the international anti-terror industry is, of course, not entirely surprising for nothing seems to agitate the public more these days than the idea of a couple of Muslims getting together and plotting the imminent take-over of the universe.

same: The freedom to travel across the globe while remaining comfortable in the safe confines of a Muslim universe.

The global Islamist project can and should be seen in this light as well, for this is yet another aspect of its ambitions. Though it is sometimes couched in somewhat aggressive, if not militarist, terms of conquest and expansion, the yearning is fundamentally a mundane one.

…the pan-Islamist vision is also one that is guided by the longing for safety and comfort, where itinerant Muslims feel the need to belong to a globalized world that is safe, or at least not hostile to them.

What is it that these global Islamists seek? On the one hand, the project is restorative in nature: It seeks to restore to the Muslim world the cosmopolitanism and universalism that it once professed but lost with the coming of European imperialism. The Muslim world, we should remember, was global in outlook and its outreach, and Muslim merchants, scholars, diplomats and mystics traveled across the world with ease and regularity that was guaranteed by the presence of long-established networks, itineraries and a communicative infrastructure that were the sinews of this global system.

On the other hand, the pan-Islamist vision is also one that is guided by the longing for safety and comfort, where itinerant Muslims feel the need to belong to a globalized world that is safe, or at least not hostile to them. In the same way that itinerant merchants and scholars of the past depended on letters of introduction and guarantees of safe passage that would allow them to travel with ease, likewise the global Islamists today seek the same assurances from an international order that ought to be protecting them. Hence Muslim identity and a common faith and value system are appealing as a guarantee that their mobility will not be restricted.

This yearning for mobility, freedom of movement, and the right to live and settle anywhere, all happen to be pragmatic, mundane and material concerns that are in fact universal and are symptoms of the globalized age we live in. The longing for an extended Islamoscape with an unbroken frontier that extents and expands continuously can and should be seen as part of the evolution of a Muslim consciousness and sensibility that is global in its scope and outlook, the pining for a global Muslim citizenship so to speak.

Already we see the first real material evidence of such a global network in the making around us: Talk of a global Muslim currency (the so-called golden dinar), that was dismissed as pseudo-economic froth not too long ago, has gained momentum and is being taken seriously by some of the more developed Muslim countries in the world. Likewise is the idea of a common Muslim trading bloc, to demonstrate the combined purchasing power of the so-called "Muslim dollar" and its market. The landscape of the Muslim world today is littered with hundreds of "Muslim hotels" and resorts that cater to the culturally-specific needs of Muslims, whatever they might be. And there is even talk of the world's first "Islamic car"—a project mooted by the governments of Iran and Malaysia—to help Muslims travel around the world in the comfort of a Muslim environment, albeit confined within the four doors of the passengers' cabin.

In many respects it is neither surprising nor unexpected that Muslims today would have such global ambitions for we live in a global age where the very idea of global citizenship—underpinned by the values of cosmopolitanism and universalism—are in common currency. How does this global Islamic vision differ from that of other faith communities, who likewise wish to create a safe space for the faith's adherents the world over; and crucially, how does this global outlook differ from the universalist claims and ambitions of global capital that has brought us a host of safe spaces and safe networks of communication and movement—from the ubiquitous Hilton hotels that are universally uniform to the phenomenon of a McWorld where the staple diet of urban denizens in many countries today happens to be cheeseburgers with french fries (or Freedom Fries, as they were re-christened recently)?

Looking closer at some of the global Islamist networks that span the globe today, such as the Tablighi Jama'at (the world's biggest Muslim missionary movement), the network of Islamist parties with transnational or supra-national ambitions, Muslim guilds and trading groups, Sufi mystical networks and the like, we can see that they all share family resemblances with the more mainstream modes of globalization that is capital-driven. This is not to say that Islamist networks can be likened to McDonalds or cast as a franchise business with branches to be opened around every street corner. But it does mean that much of the talk of pan-Islamism and the creation of global Islamist networks we have seen the world over thus far is not as alien or exotic as we might think. Fundamentally, the fundamentalists are concerned with something far more mundane and ordinary, which is to provide a service that meets a need that has become all the more prevalent in the late-capitalist globalized age we live in: This is the sense of global citizenship and the feeling of belonging to a globalized world where one is no longer a stranger to the other.

What these global networks do for Muslims (as they do for globally-minded Christians, Hindus and other faith communities) is offer a sense of global citizenship and belonging where the world is rendered hospitable rather than hostile, and where the global landscape is rendered familiar and homely, made recognizable by the proliferation of familiar religious markers and symbols such as the mosque and the ubiquitous "halal food" sign that hangs above the door of Muslim restaurants from New York to Beijing. However, it would be totally inaccurate to summarize religiously-inspired global networking as being entirely driven by faith and religious conviction, or to conclude that it has no material component.

It is therefore crucial to identity the political economy of this form of globalization and to begin research on the political economy of such religious movements, identifying the agents and actors, the contact points and movement of capital across borders that is taking place as this network expands and deepens. A further dimension that needs to be studied in detail is the relation between seemingly quietist non-political (or even anti-political) movements like the Tablighi Jama'at and other more established political movements, parties and institutions in the respective host countries where they are situated and move through.

Again, we focus on the Tablighi Jama'at as our starting point: The Tabligh's extensive network across the globe and its *modus operandi* that covers every aspect of social mobilization from recruitment, conversion, training, rules and norms of mutuality and association, and its support (both overt and covert) of Islamist parties and organizations all over the world, makes it a good example of a transnational religious movement that clearly has a political impact—even if it outwardly denies having any political ambitions. Understanding the workings of such global

itinerant religious networks may also lend support to the claim that globalization has never been a linear process with fixed objectives and trajectories.

It is important to take seriously the socio-political import and impact of these groups as they work with and within established and recognized modes of globalization, and how in their own way they have been the beneficiaries of the latest revolutionary discoveries and developments in modern communications, transport and media technologies. This once again confirms the view that contemporary religio-political networks are among the inheritors and beneficiaries of the globalization revolution, as well as underlying the fact that globalization's axiomatic effects and modalities are not the exclusive purview of a specific set of actors (re. global capital), but that it can and has been used by other actors and agents as well.

Related to this are the challenges that such networks give to newly established nation-states in Asia, many of which still retain the epiphenomenal traits and characteristics of neo-feudal, neo-traditional hybrid states where notions of identity, citizenship, political-geographical boundaries, etc., are not fully entrenched or embedded in the public domain. In countries experiencing the resurgence of political Islam, for instance, the question over whether the individual is a citizen first or a global Muslim first is of great political import as it raises very real political challenges to the ruling institutions.

In Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia, where pan-Islamist parties and movements like the Hizb ut-Tahrir exist and openly call for the overthrow of the state in order to create a pan-Islamic super-state under the heading of the caliphate, such ambitions have been brought closer to reality thanks to the development of rapid global communications technology. The Internet and easily available transport have made it possible for there to be a global "Muslimscape" existing in "real time" when members of the Hizb ut-Tahrir from Pakistan to Malaysia and Indonesia may communicate and cooperate simultaneously, irrespective of temporal and geographical differences.

If, as we have shown in our own work on the Tablighi Jama'at in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia,[47] such organizations prioritize a sense of identity that is faith-based and which does not recognize the political and historical realities of the modern nation-states they currently operate in, what does this imply for the saliency and relevance of modern concepts such as citizenship, constitutionalism and the rule of law in a democratic state? In the course of our field research with the Tabligh across Southeast Asia from 2003 to 2007, it was clear that the members of the movement we lived with and studied paid scant attention to political differences between states and governments and were thus able to move across the Southeast Asian region with ease (at times by-passing legal constraints such as border checks and immigration rules) on the grounds that, as Muslims, they belonged to, and lived in, a pan-Islamic global space where every Muslim country was part of the greater domain of *Darul Islam* and, as such, the homeland of all Muslims. In such cases, being Muslim was the only requirement for entry and exit across and within this shared "Muslimscape." A similar mindset has been identified among newly mobilized Hindu, Buddhist and Christian evangelical and missionary movements as well, who do not recognize nation-state boundaries and who actually see the world as God's earth and thus an open space for all members of the faith community.

Should such a mindset become normalized among members of these faith communities, we may well see the emergence of new network systems where a parallel political economy will be constructed in the future. Hence the need to analyze and understand the parallel global economy

[47] Noor, Salafiyya *Purists in the land of Shadow Puppets and Hindu Temples*; and, "Pathans to the East!"

that is being constructed by groups like the Tablighi Jama'at as they—and their supporters who also belong to other professions including education, transport, communication, commerce, etc.—help to build a global network system that is entirely self-financed and self-regenerating with its own support and client base altogether. In the context of South and Southeast Asia today, where practically all the major Abrahamic and Asian faiths—Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism—exist, understanding the political-economic dimension of these parallel global systems and their attendant economies is crucial. Thus far, there is still no comprehensive study of the political economy that underpins the Tabligh network in Southeast Asia; and scholars are not even able to answer the simple question of how the Tabligh funds its activities and sustains the constant movement of its members across the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region that is made up of nearly a dozen countries.

The Ties that Bind: Speaking *Islamese* in the Global Muslimscape

> The rise of Islamism was only possible when the availability of Islam could be articulated into a counter-hegemonic discourse.[48]

Apart from the political-economy aspect of the global Islamist network, we also have to look closely at the development of the common discourse that unites Islamists and binds their network together. Islamist movements the world over are connected on an equal discursive plane where a number of common themes and concerns are at work: The primary condition that has to be met for any of these groups to belong to the same global network is, of course, their commitment to Islam as a political ideology that can and is instrumentalized as a means to achieving political mobilization, organization and eventually—they hope—the acquisition of political power.

Yet it should be emphasized that not all Muslim groups belong to this global Islamist network. All over the Muslim world today there exist scores of Muslim activist networks, NGOs, civil society organizations and even political parties that have remained within the secular fold and which take as their goals issues such as gender equality, inter-religious dialogue, conflict resolution, education and social emancipation. These groups—be they NGOs or political parties—are not defined as "Islamist" for the simple reason that their ultimate aim is not to wrestle power from secular elites and states or to erect new political structures that are primarily and solely based on Islam as an alternative.

Furthermore, there are also scores of pietist movements, self-help groups, Muslim associational networks and the like that are likewise not primarily concerned with the task of gaining power and forming governments under the banner of Islam. These groups may serve other purposes and be service-providers in other respects. In the case of countries where Muslims are the minority (such as western Europe, India, the Philippines, Thailand, etc.) these groups are often seen and cast as communitarian groupings that often serve other needs such as the protection of group identities, etc.

The Islamist network we are concerned with here happens to include those political parties, NGOs, movements and social networks that are concerned mainly with the struggle to create an Islamic state, albeit in a myriad of forms, strategies and trajectories —opting for either "top-down" or "bottom-up" Islamization, working first on a societal basis, and so on.

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[48] Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Books, 1997), 73.

The common thread that binds this network together is the discursive economy that they all share. This form of "Islamese" happens to be a discursive economy of its own with its own attendant rules and norms of mutuality and inclusion/exclusion. We emphasize the discursive—rather than linguistic—aspect of Islamese for we have now come to the point where the Muslim world no longer has a distinct language. In Europe the results of assimilationist policies means that the common language of the Muslim community is no longer Arabic, Urdu or Hindi, but rather French or English. Likewise, across the Muslim world, the Arabic language is no longer the dominant language of Muslims, for it has been surpassed by Urdu/Hindi, Bengali and Bahasa Malaysia/Bahasa Indonesia. In the virtual space of the Internet, on the other hand, English is fast becoming the main language of the global Muslim community.

Notwithstanding the linguistic and cultural differences between Muslims all over the world today, it remains a fact that the global Islamist network occupies the same discursive register and can agree on a number of common issues and concerns. It is this shared understanding of a set of rudimentary premises and values that defines the shape and frontiers of the Islamists' common discursive economy, which we have called "Islamese."

What is "Islamese" and how does one speak it? As pointed out above, not all Muslim groups speak the language of the global Islamist network. Muslim feminist groups like Malaysia's Sisters in Islam (SIS) or the feminist networks, like Women Living Under Muslim Law (WLUML), may be made up of Muslim activists, but they certainly do not belong to the same Islamist networks that brings together the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and the Arab states, the Jama'at-e Islami of Pakistan and South Asia and the Islamists of Southeast Asia. The fact that the former cluster speaks of and about Muslims does not necessarily mean that they have gained entry into the more exclusive network of the latter.

…the discourse of the Islamists is counter-hegemonic by nature and aims to set up an alternative hegemonic worldview that is as totalizing and maximalist as the one it opposes.

The Islamese spoken by the Islamists is fundamentally a discourse of power that is instrumental and utilitarian by nature; a discourse with its own attendant vocabulary and epistemology that may or may not be predicated on traditional notions of law, legality, political process and history; but which nonetheless is often instrumentalized for the sake of gaining political leverage and raising the profile and Islamist (as opposed to Islamic) credentials of the enunciators. Since the end of the post-colonial era and, more significantly, following the collapse and apparent failure of the many nationalist projects led by Muslim elites in the Arab world, South and Southeast Asia, this common Islamese discourse has come to the fore as the new radical alternative to the failed nationalist-developmentalist discourse of the recent past.

In its form and content, the discourse of the Islamists is counter-hegemonic by nature and aims to set up an alternative hegemonic worldview that is as totalizing and maximalist as the one it opposes. The common themes that mark the nodal points of this Islamese discourse are: 1. the sustained critique of secular developmental ideologies that are seen as capitalist and, therefore,

Western, Eurocentric and un-Islamic; 2. the sustained critique of former secular Muslim regimes as being pawns or tools of the capitalistic, materialistic West; 3. the casting of the Western world in general and the United States of America in particular as the antithetical Other to the Muslim world; 4. the critique of the allies of the West, notably Israel, but also other pro-Western states such as India and also Muslim governments and regimes that are cast as pro-Western; and 5. the deliberate juxtaposition of the West in an oppositional dialectical relationship to Islam and the Muslim world that confirms the workings of a monochromatic moral, ideological and political divide between the two.

As a result of this, two chains of equivalences have been created: The first, which is cast in a positive light, is the one that links together Islam with the Islamists, the Islamist political project and the struggle against Western hegemony. The second links together the West, Western cultural imperialism, hegemony, capitalism and immorality in a negative chain of equivalences that may also be expanded to include the other related "enemies of Islam" that includes Muslim feminists, democrats, "moderates and liberals," Western-educated elites, "Westernized" Muslims, and so on.

This double chain of equivalences makes up the fundamental oppositional dichotomy upon which Islamese rests and operates within. Since the 1960s, the expansion of the parallel Islamist civil society space has helped to create, expand and consolidate the network of Islamist movements, NGOs and parties that agree to the same terms of Islamese discourse as stated above, regardless of the differences of language, culture and geography that may separate them. As a result of the increasing contact and transnational sharing of ideas among the Islamists of South and Southeast Asia, we have now come to the situation where Islamists of the Jama'at-e Islami of Pakistan have more in agreement with their co-Islamists in PAS than they might have with other non-Islamist Muslim groups in their own country.

The challenge that this poses for governments in the Muslim world is considerable and unprecedented, for today Islamist parties in Muslim countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia and further afield cooperate, support and may rely on their Islamist counterparts on the international Islamist scene more than ever before. The fact that all these groups speak the same discourse of Islamese also means that their superficial cultural differences have been superseded by a deeper and stronger consensus on the discursive level. This is a development that none of the contemporary Muslim states of the world today had ever predicted and had not anticipated when they first embarked on the path of modernization and economic development in the 1960s and 1970s.

Religious Networks and the Challenge to Mainstream Politics

> No civilization, whether Islamic or un-Islamic, that views life from a universal stand-point and possesses a comprehensive system of administering the worldly affairs, can resist the urge for power in order that it may change the social life of all its subjects after its own pattern. Without the power to enforce, it is meaningless to believe in or present a doctrine as a way of life.[49]

All in all, these global religio-political networks present a daunting challenge to newly emerging postcolonial states that are themselves in a state of flux and crisis due to their own vulnerabilities rendered by the advance of global capital. Across Asia, practically every single post-colonial

[49] Abul Al'aa Maudoodi, *Tajdid-o-Ihya-i-Din* (1st ed., 1940, republished: Petaling Jaya: The Other Press, 1999), 15.

state today faces the crisis of governance with regards to their own respective populations that have grown increasingly politically literate, mobilized and active over the past three decades. A succession of global economic crises has also rendered these postcolonial economies open and vulnerable to the vagaries of the global market and the power of global capital.

Islamist networks have profited from this crisis of governmentality in many ways: They have assumed the mantle of the new anti-globalization (also linked to anti-secularism and anti-Westernization) forces which was once the elected space of the nationalists of the 1950s and 1960s. With the gradual cooptation of statist elites as a result of the slow development of a globally integrated economy and international political community, the liminal voices of global Islamists have come to occupy the center state of national politics in many Muslim countries. This was most visibly demonstrated in Pakistan, Bangladesh and in countries like Indonesia that have witnessed the proliferation of more than fifty Islamist parties in half a decade alone. Voices that were once marginal like that of the conservative cleric Abu Bakar Baa'syir have come to occupy center stage in Indonesian politics, although it has to be said that nothing has changed in the form and content of Baa'syir's rhetoric since he first came on the scene in the mid-1980s.

Understanding this shift where the Islamist voices have come closer to the center stage of national politics in many Muslim countries (and the same can be said of Hindu, Buddhist and Christian actors in other non-Muslim Asian countries) means taking into consideration how and why globalization has actually helped to weaken the credibility and standing of the older generation of statist, developmentalist-oriented national leaders and ruling elite.

Here again the network capabilities of these religio-political groups would have serious implications on the national politics and mainstream public domain in their respective countries. Looking at how the localized conflicts in zones like Patani (southern Thailand), Kashmir, Mindanao (the southern Philippines) have now been elevated to the global level, it is vital to identify the workings of the globalization process and how such global networks have managed to create this common pan-Islamic terrain with a unitary geography and real-time correspondence that does not recognize or stop at the frontiers of established nation-states. A case in point is just how the people of Patani, for instance, have been made to think of their local provincial struggle as part of a wider, long-term global Islamist struggle.

All in all, the thrust of our research has to be this: Globalization processes and technologies have not invented these pan-Islamic networks, but they have certainly aided these networks' development and penetration further. The net result has been the creation of an increasingly narrow and well-connected global Islamic space with a singular geography and time-line that baffles the governmentality of technocrats and nation-builders who are more commonly used to working within the framework of mainstream national politics with identifiable mainstream national actors and agents. But should these trends continue and should this networking process embed itself to the point where it presents communities with new notions of identity and differences (such as that of the universal Muslim subject), then the very notion of what constitutes a political mainstream itself may be undermined, questioned or eroded. Whether the spread of these networks will simply lead to another global network system with its own mainstream geography and time-frame remains an open question, but what is certain is that the rise and spread of such pan-Islamic global networks has forced us to question the thesis that the globalization process is a singular one.

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Transnational Ideologies and Actors at the Level of Society in South and Southeast Asia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper examines key transnational Islamic movements and missionary networks active in South and Southeast Asia—the Indian Tablighi Jama'at (TJ), the Palestinian Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), and Saudi Arabian Salafi movements. The paper looks at the structure and ideology of these movements, in general, giving particular attention to their embeddedness in everyday life. The paper observes these movements' recruitment and training strategies as well as the patterns of socialization taking place within these movements. A global market has emerged in response to the phenomenal growth of these transnational movements wherein Islamic actors compete for followers and authority while local Muslim communities negotiate their ties with transnational Islamic networks.

MAIN FINDINGS

By joining transnational Islamic networks, Muslims from the most marginal societies in South and Southeast Asia are brought to the forefront of the globalized Islamic community. Participation in these movements gives downtrodden masses the status of faithful members of the umma, lending them prestige and psychological uplift. Transnational Islamic actors and movements contribute to the growing Islamization of society, the increased presence of Islam in public spaces, the individualization of Islam and Islamic piety, and the consumption of Islamic products in daily life. The TJ, HT, and Salafi movements strive to be the vanguard of the Islamic revolution throughout South and Southeast Asia. These movements attempt to build a truly Islamic society on the model of the Prophet Muhammad and his faithful followers. While the Tablighi Jama'at is a quietist, apolitical movement operating at the grassroots level, the political Hizb ut-Tahrir recruits its cadres from urban middle-class students. Both movements benefit from the growing presence and demands of a new generation of young Muslims, ages 18-25, who look for a total, encapsulating form of Islam as a modern solution to their problems and as a path to spiritual experience and strengthened piety. The growing presence of political Islamist and Salafi movements contributes to the rapid erosion of traditional Muslim elites' authority as well as the increasing competition between traditional Sufi groups and modernizing reformist movements.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Policymakers should avoid confusing transnational pietist movements with militant groups. While Islamic movements like the TJ and HT are political in their indoctrination methods, they are nonviolent. However, their rhetoric of hatred and anti-Americanism remains a topic of serious concern.
- Pietist movements should be given suitable channels for expression. Many Muslims suffer discrimination and political exclusion. Providing these communities with channels for expression will help Muslims openly fulfill their political and spiritual aspirations. Repressive measures will only create hatred and resentment.
- Involve transnational Islamic actors in the democratic process. When Islamic groups and movements enter the democratic process, they tend to develop more moderate and pragmatic approaches.
- In focusing on the global, policymakers should not lose sight of the local. Transnational Islamic ideas and movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, TJ and HT are being localized and indigenized at the same time. Policymakers should be alert to local differences and realities in crafting effective and nuanced solutions.

The dearth of research focusing on transnational Islamic da'wa (missionary)[50] movements and networks that emerged in the 1980s at the level of society should be underlined. Social scientists have rarely provided a clear description of the workings of transnational Islamic movements in local society. However, a new generation of scholars has examined the circulation of ideas and ideologies across these transnational networks as well as the emergence of new global social configurations in the dynamic Muslim environment of the South (i.e., the countries of South and Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East).[51]

In particular, educational and missionary efforts, as well as political activities in the Islamic world, give strength to an alternate form of Islamic globalization along the South-South axis (i.e., between the countries of the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia).[52] To grasp this dynamic, we have to look simultaneously at the social organization and ideology of transnational Islamic movements at a global level and their interfaces with local society at a micro-level.[53]

From the global and local levels, we see that the Islamic field in South and Southeast Asia is a highly dynamic, globalized, and polarized one, in which competing transnational Islamic movements and networks rely on diaspora communities and on highly fluid, but effective channels of education and missionary work for their continuing expansion and dissemination of ideas.

To better understand this dynamic Islamic field, this paper examines key transnational movements and missionary networks that are active in South and Southeast Asia—the Indian Tablighi Jama'at (TJ), the Palestinian Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), and Saudi Arabian Salafi[54] movements. The paper looks at the structure and ideology of these movements and networks, in general, and their embeddedness in everyday life, in particular.

This paper presents case studies of the Tablighi Jama'at and the Hizb ut-Tahrir to show the transformation of local religious organizations into global movements, as well as the impact of these movements on local society and Muslims across South and Southeast Asia. While the Tablighi Jama'at is a quietist, apolitical movement that operates at the grassroots level, the political Hizb ut-Tahrir recruits its cadres from the spectrum of urban middle-class students. Both movements benefit from the growing presence and demands of a new generation of young Muslims, ages 18-25, who look for a total, encapsulating form of Islam as a modern solution to their problems providing a community of mutual support, and as a path to spiritual experience and strengthened piety.

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50 *Da'wa* literally means "to call," and connotes an invitation to prayer. Islamic revivalist movements have interpreted *da'wa* as the obligation to proselytize (Masud 2000: xxi).

51 See Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Helmut Buchholt and Georg Stauth, *Investigating the South-South Dimension of Modernity and Islam: Circulating Visions and Ideas, Intellectual Figures, Locations* (Münster: LIT, 1999); and Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); *Global Political Islam* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007). On transnational connections through media and networks, see Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections. Culture, People, Places* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

52 This alternate Islamic globalization occurring along the South-South axis bears ties to the North (i.e., Europe, the United States, and Japan) through migrants who embody the South inside the North. For further discussion of this issue, see Johan Meulemann, *Islam in the Era of Globalization. Muslim Attitudes towards Modernity and Identity* (Jakarta: INIS, 2001).

With regards to the Deobandi transnational educational movement, Reetz states: "The Deobandi networking proves how adaptable the channels of the South are to the new ways of globalization and to what extent they also drive it ahead, that globalization has strengthened alternate approaches side by side with the dominating ways of the West" (Reetz 2007: 158-159).

53 See John R. Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); and Alexander Horstmann, "The Tablighi Jama'at, Transnational Islam, and the Transformation of the Self between Southern Thailand and South Asia, " *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 1(2007): 26-40.

54 Salafi refers to the religion of the "ancestors," and is a literalist and puritanical version of Islam promoted by Saudi Arabia.

The Tablighi Jama'at and the Hizb ut-Tahrir are lay movements that are mainly led by professionals and not by the *ulama*.[55] The ideology of these movements is anti-secular, anti-Zionist, and pointedly anti-American. The Hizb ut-Tahrir is highly influenced by the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB)—especially Sayyid Qutb—and has adopted the MB's organizational patterns.[56] Both the Tablighi Jama'at and the Hizb ut-Tahrir demand strict obedience to the *shari'a* (Islamic law) which they regard as divine law. While the Tablighi Jama'at strives for the inner purification of the individual Muslim, the Hizb ut-Tahrir uses a nostalgic, a-historical picture of the global caliphate to mobilize new followings.

What emerges is a huge market, in which transnational movements compete for followers and religious authority, and in which local Muslims gain access to global Islamic networks and, sometimes, religious careers.

This paper pays particular attention to these transnational movements' recruitment and training strategies as well as the patterns of socialization taking place within these movements.[57] As the example of the Hizb ut-Tahrir in Indonesia shows, transnational movements are localized in the context of the nation-state and have to be flexible and strategic.

The huge expansion of these and related movements that have shifted from the fringes of society to the global center stage also requires the development of a "faith bureaucracy."[58] What emerges is a huge market, in which transnational movements compete for followers and religious authority, and in which local Muslims gain access to global Islamic networks and, sometimes, religious careers. As the paper also shows, transnational actors increasingly benefit from and contribute to

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55 See Alexander Horstmann, "The Revitalization of Islam in Southeast Asia: The Cases of Darul Arqam and Jama'at Tabligh," *Studia Islamika* 13, no. 1 (2006): 67-9.

56 Since its founding in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul Muslimin*), the first transnational Islamist movement, has provided both the intellectual foundations and the core methodology for many transnational movements and Islamic groups across the Muslim world. The MB strives for a total Islamic system encompassing all aspects of life, and one from which the state cannot be possibly separated. For a discussion of the MB, see Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam,* 68.

Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), the MB's chief ideologue during the height of its militancy in the 1960s, whose works have been widely translated and received, has become one of the most influential Islamist thinkers across the Muslim world and has greatly influenced the HT. Qutb called for a "Qur'anic generation," modelled on the example of the Prophet's companions, who would engage the individual believer with the truth of the *shari'a* while bypassing the traditional *ulama*. The wide translation and publication of a number of the Muslim Brotherhood's writings has led to a preponderance of its ideas within the general Islamic revival movements in Southeast Asia.

The MB's small cells, where teachers, who are not drawn from the *ulama*, train students in small groups is, of course, one of the key organizational patterns by which local Muslims from South and Southeast Asia are increasingly integrated into the circuits of alternative globalization. The new training program introduced to the Indonesian HT in the early 1970s relied upon the key ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood. See James J. Fox, "Currents in Contemporary Islam in Indonesia." Paper presented at Harvard Asia Vision 21, April 29-May 1, 2004, Cambridge, Mass.

57 Apart from the functioning and conceptualization of the transnational movements, we have to also analyze the socialization and transformation of the individuals engaged in these networks.

58 See Dietrich Reetz, "The 'Faith Bureaucracy' of the Tablighi Jama'at: An Insight into their System of Self-Organisation (Intizam)," in *Colonialism, Modernity, and Religious Identities: Religious Reform Movements in South Asia*, ed. Gwilym Beckerlegge (Oxford, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 98-124. In this article, Reetz argues that the extensive mobilization of new members into their folds requires Islamic movements to establish some form of religious bureaucracy.

the production and consumption of traditional and electronic Islamic media to disseminate their ideas in what is referred to as "pamphlet Islam."[59]

Following this introduction, the paper is divided into six main sections. First, the paper provides an overview of the Tablighi Jama'at, paying close attention to the life and daily rituals of Tablighi members, the movement's leadership structure and hierarchy, and its uses of traditional and modern media outlets. Next, the paper looks at the Hizb ut-Tahrir, focusing on the HT chapter in Indonesia (HTI) to illustrate the adaptation of the movement in the local context. The paper then compares the TJ and HT to examples of modern Sufi brotherhoods, illustrating the revitalized relevance of Sufi brotherhoods and global Sufi cults for these movements.[60] Following this discussion, the paper outlines the growing influence of Salafi movements in South and Southeast Asia. After its concluding remarks, the paper presents key policy implications emerging from its central findings.

The Tablighi Jama'at between South and Southeast Asia, Europe and the World

The Tablighi Jama'at (TJ) (or, sometimes, Jama'at Tabligh), a proselytizing movement founded in India in 1927, has its headquarters in Nizamuddin, a suburb of New Delhi. From its humble beginnings in Mewat, India, the Tablighi Jama'at has become what is probably the largest Islamic missionary movement in the world.[61] Through its northern India-based leadership, the permanent circulation of the Jama'at throughout the world, and the TJ's *ijtimas* (mass congregations) in Raiwind, Tongi, and New Delhi, the TJ effectively establishes relations with Muslims all over the world.

Overview

The rise of the TJ to 130 countries has brought this religious movement, which lived on the fringe of society, to the mainstream. In particular, the presence of the TJ in South Asia is overwhelming. The movement has created opportunities for business, education and staged mass marriages held at its numerous *ijtimas*. The TJ has also come to attract a more heterogeneous following. While earlier ethnographies emphasized the South Asian and lower class character of the TJ, the movement today targets white-collar concerns and aspirations, and includes members from across the world, including professionals, civil servants and businessmen. The TJ seems to thrive in Muslim minority contexts in which they are able to show off their religious piety and devotion as well as in Muslim majority contexts where they enjoy the support of Muslim elites.

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[59] "Pamphlet Islam" comes as an inevitable consequence of the growing interest in all matters relating to Islam and Islamic lifestyle. The section on Islam makes up a large share of the increasing number of bookstores in Indonesia and across the world. Pamphlets or books that are translated from Arabic are accorded a certain authority, even when the particular context is virtually unknown. Within this heterogeneous collection of publications, there has appeared a substantial body of literature devoted to the plight of Islam. Many of the publications are anti-Western, anti-capitalist, and pointedly anti-American.

The flood of translations from Arabic without a clear author or authority deserves careful attention and is particularly at odds with the *pesantren* (traditionalist Islamic boarding school) tradition of education in Southeast Asia, which has traditionally concentrated on the interpretation of classic texts guided by authoritative *ulama*. See Martin van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 146 (1990): 226-269.

[60] It should be noted that these actors are not isolated, but act in conjunction and competition with each other. Some of the Southeast Asian Muslim minority communities, such as those found in southern Thailand, Cambodia, or Mindanao, have become laboratories for the missionary activities of a variety of Islamic organizations, including Salafi, Shia, TJ, and the HT. However, only the Tablighi Jama'at reaches into the remote villages of South and Southeast Asia.

[61] See Barbara Metcalf, "Travelers' Tales in the Tablighi Jama'at," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 588, no. 1 (2003): 136-148.

Sikand shows that the experience among the Meo (the inhabitants of Mewat) was decisive for the TJ's development.[62] The philosophy of the "inner jihad"[63] developed from the TJ's defensive position against the Arya Samaj's neo-Hindu missionary campaign in India. In its *Shuddhi* (spiritual purification) campaign, the Arya Samaj aimed to re-convert Mewat's lower-caste indigenous population. Working among the Meo, the TJ's founder, Maulana Mohamad Ilyas, and other Muslim activists tried to establish more efficient organizational forms to improve the channels of communication and to provide new opportunities of Islamic education by reaching out to every village and house.

Reaching out to the rural masses, the TJ has encouraged non-*ulama* preachers to take an active role in Tabligh activities. Although the TJ used the books of the Deobandi *ulama* in the beginning, these were gradually replaced by others. The TJ's anti-political stance was influenced by the traumatic experience of Muslims and their fragile position in India.[64] However, making Muslims conscious of their separate identity and aware of their social obligations to promote *da'wa* is, of course, a very political activity. The TJ preach only to people who are already Muslims. The movement invites Muslims to its *ijtimas* in Raiwind and other key cities for the "purification of their souls instead of sending them to Afghanistan."

Recent scholarship shows that the Tablighis are very diligent in crossing boundaries of gender while uniting and bridging the differences between family clans and ethnic groups.[65] The expansive character of the Tablighi Jama'at may be attributed to their ability to manage multiple followings locally and worldwide while maintaining cohesion. Through door-to-door preaching, and organizing permanent preaching groups at local mosques (*masjidwar Jama'at*), the TJ are bridging spaces in and outside the mosque. The TJ's rapid expansion through Indian Muslim diaspora in England or South Africa also boosts the Deobandi transnational educational movement, whose students are regular preacher-travelers in the TJ's transnational networks.

As noted above, while the TJ is recognized for its distinctive South Asian character, the movement is increasingly successful at integrating locals from South and Southeast Asian societies into its networks and attracting them to the TJ's center in northern India.[66] Muslims from Southeast Asia have spent long periods of time on the TJ's great outings (*chillas*) and many of them have studied in Tablighi madrassas in South Asia, sometimes acquiring the prestigious title of *alim* or *maulana*. These students and preachers have become important brokers of religious power and authority after their return to Southeast Asia, as they are also able to communicate both in Urdu and in their native language.

In Southeast Asia, the TJ is active in Malaysia and Indonesia, and count some of the Indonesian military among their followers. The TJ seems, also, to have a huge impact on Muslim minority contexts, such as those found in southern Thailand, Cambodia, and Mindanao, where transnational financial

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62 See Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002).

63 Jihad is defined here as effort, purification, and struggle, not as violence.

64 After the independence of India in 1947, Muslims in India suffered from Hindu riots for several years.

65 For example, Malay Muslims in southern Thailand used to look down on Thai-speaking Muslims whom they suspected of being polluted by the Thai-Buddhist religious influence. The Jama'at has sought to overcome this arrogance in its attempt to reach out to every Muslim community. Thus, Muslims from the Malay-speaking area go to the Thai-speaking villages and invite their brothers to prayer in the local mosques. For further information on this topic, see the works of Gaboriau (1999); Masud (2000); and Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at*.

66 See Alexander Horstmann, "The Tablighi Jama'at, Transnational Islam, and the Transformation of the Self between Southern Thailand and South Asia," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 1 (2007): 26-40.

flows are crucial for the survival of these minorities. The TJ plays a key role in the Islamization processes of these marginal societies and contributes greatly to their Muslim awakening.

In South Asia, Bangladesh is a success story of the TJ with millions of followers. Geographically, the TJ has a strong presence in Dhaka and in East Bengal where dominant Deobandi *ulama* helped to spread the movement.[67] In Bangladesh and in Pakistan, the TJ competes with the Jama'at-i Islami, a movement and political party founded by Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi.[68]

Despite the TJ's phenomenal growth, many Muslims have left the movement out of disillusion and have turned to movements with more political agendas, such as the Hizb ut-Tahrir.[69] Furthermore, the TJ are not accepted by every community as many local religious teachers and imams resist the entrance of the TJ chapters. Thus, the proselytizing TJ members are sometimes confronted with harsh rejection, as local Muslims do not want to change their traditions. For these Muslims, the TJ does not respect traditional Islamic education as many of their followers are illiterate. Therefore, the local Muslim communities do not see any need to replace their own leaders with the young Tablighi preacher- travelers.

…local Muslims are increasingly attracted to the modernity of the TJ and other missionary networks as these movements provide an enormous psychological boost for Muslims facing social insecurity, political exclusion, and economic marginalization.

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State Responses to the Tablighi Jama'at

The success of the TJ depends on the patronage of sympathetic governments. The movement's political quiescence has saved the TJ from persecution in many countries, although countries such as China or Myanmar monitor their activities closely. In Thailand, by contrast, the government has encouraged the TJ's activities in the southern provinces as they hope that the TJ's *da'wa* work

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67 See Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at.*

68 Mawdudi was a contemporary of Hasan al-Banna who worked in the South Asian context. Mawdudi's writings have become extremely popular in the Islamic world. He comes back to al-Banna in stating that the Islamization of society must come before the state could possibly be Islamized. However, Mawdudi hoped that the Islamic state would initiate large-scale Islamic reforms to establish the *shari'a* firmly. Mawdudi became a major advocate for political Islam or Islamic revolution from above. Mawdudi did not originally found the Jama'at-i Islami to capture state power but to extend his thinking from a segregate holy community of the faithful. However, the Jama'at-i Islami developed into a political party and mass movement which openly declares its wish to acquire state power. See Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 58ff.; and Vali Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).

While Mawdudi was known to have supported the TJ in the beginning, he distanced himself from the movement, harshly criticizing TJ's apolitical and quietist attitude.

69 Ideologically, the TJ does not overlap with the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), as the HT has a more activist, political program. However, some of the TJ may very well become members of the HT if they are not satisfied with the TJ's quietist attitude

may draw the attention of the Malay-speaking Muslims away from the insurgency. The TJ is one of the few missionary movements that engage in proselytizing activities among the Rohinga in the Myanmar-Bangladesh borderland. In Malaysia, the TJ are allowed to move freely, but their activities are closely watched. In Indonesia, like other movements (e.g., the HT), the TJ has grown quickly following the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998.

Life and Ritual of the Tablighi

The life of a Tablighi is a permanent Hajj (a Muslim's pilgrimage to Mecca), and his conduct is regulated to the minutest detail so that it conforms in every aspect to the Prophet Muhammad's life. Besides visiting and recruiting local Muslims, the primary objective of the TJ's missionary outings is the development of new recruits. The outings are justified as a *hijra* (migration) which literally means to leave one's home to devote oneself to *da'wa* and remembrance of God (*dhikr*). Once a Tablighi has decided to depart, he severs all contacts to his relatives. From now on, the leader of the outing takes him in his charge. From the time of entering the TJ, the novice is part of a fictive kinship community or "family" of brothers.

The Tablighis organize regular meetings, in which they are seated in circles. Access to the circle implies respect for the ritual of purification. Consequently, Tablighis joining the circle must perform ablutions. The innermost zone of the Tablighi leadership—relatively secret and regarded with a mixture of awe and respect—consists of a small circle of individuals that exhibits similarities with classic brotherhoods. This professional group constitutes an international circuit bringing Tablighis to countries where the Tablighis are established. The other circle forming around this small circle is made up of new, youthful leaders who are socialized in the core group for future leadership functions, as well as those Tablighis for whom membership is only a temporary state.

These circles are the rings of a symbolic chain, which constitutes the force of the Jamaʿat. The Tablighis pray, perform *dhikr*, and read the Qur'an. The Tablighi's training in public speaking begins when he accompanies an experienced Tablighi on the *da'wa* rounds. These rounds of preaching are precisely planned and are held on every Thursday during the week. During these rounds, discussions of the *Life of the Companions of the Prophet* are used to emphasize the necessity to convert others to the "good religion." Critical questions are discouraged.

Tablghis apply the rules of an ascetic Islamic lifestyle to all domains of everyday life, including their social relations with other people, their family and professional life, and to mundane activities such as eating. The cohesion of Tablighi communities comes at the price of cutting all ties to their non-Muslim neighbors. Unlike the Afghan Taliban which sought to use state institutions to achieve morality, the TJ depends on *da'wa* and persuasion directed toward individuals. As Metcalf writes, "It is up to a few, like the first lonely Muslims of Mecca, to achieve a veritable revolution in mass behavior."[70] The TJ refrains from preaching among non-Muslims as they feel that non-Muslim governments would negatively perceive such targeting.

The Significance of Tablighi Texts

For the TJ, religious education (*talim*) is based on the Qur'an and hadith, and especially on a volume by Maulana Mohammad Zakariya, entitled *Faza'il-e A'mal* ("The Merits and Rewards of Good Action"). This text, published since the 1950s, has come to be known as the *Tablighi*

[70] Metcalf, "Travelers' Tales in the Tablighi Jamaʿat," 139-140.

Curriculum. The very reading of this volume is believed to generate merit. The book is always read aloud and its repetitive contents are memorized.

For Tablighis, texts alone are dead. Texts can only be alive if they are embodied in practice. Thus, the movement's texts are not only put into practice by the preaching travelers, the preaching travelers also *embody* the hadith, as they become, literally, living hadith. For the TJ, it is not enough to pray and to study the texts. The individual has to be effective and struggle for souls and to walk to the remotest places where Muslims live in order to please Allah.

Internal Organization, Hierarchy, and Conduits of Local and Transnational Activity

Reports portraying the Jama'at as an informal association with no written constitution, standardized organizational rules and procedures, leadership hierarchy, or official records, are simply wrong. The huge growth of the movement requires considerable institutions of guidance, control, uniformity and motivation. Furthermore, while the Tablighis at the leadership level reproduce the myth of an egalitarian movement with no special organization involved, the movement is in fact highly hierarchical, rigid, and robust.[71]

The TJ's leadership stays firmly within the family of the original Maulana Ilyas and Maulana Mohammad Zakariya clans. After the death of Maulana Ilyas, his son Maulana Yusuf (1917-1967) was selected as his successor by the Jama'at's elders. Yusuf was an untiring worker who organized thousands of preaching groups to tour all over India. It was during Yusuf's tenure that the Jama'at's activities spread to countries in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and North America. Since Yusuf's death in 1965, Maulana Hasan has led the Jama'at and has expanded its international operations enormously. After Maulana Hasan's death, a collective of family successors took over the TJ. The TJ's central *shura* (consultative body) at Nizzamudin, India, today consists of two persons: Maulana Sa'ad, who seems to be immensely popular, and Maulana Zubair.

For the Tabligh, religious authority is to be constituted in the body of its members as a whole, acting in consultation. This interpretation of authority—to include Muslims who do not have a classical Islamic education or the charisma of sanctified descent—is a radical innovation. The Jama'at thus challenges the traditional *ulama's* monopoly on religious guidance, while engaging many of them in its work.

The TJ is ruled by a clearly defined command structure at every level.[72] The TJ's "regulars" form a minority of 10-20% of the movement's followers, while the leaders of the districts and provinces, along with the *amirs* at the movement's center (*markaz*), dominate the decision-making and set the rules. The *amir* is selected for life through informal consultation among the Jama'at's leaders. He, in turn, appoints a *shura* to advise him on important matters. While peasants are welcome to join the *shura* on a local level, the movement's religious cadre at the national or international levels consists of trusted professionals. Although the *shura* councils at the national and regional levels were meant to be temporary and flexible, with time and the pressure of growing numbers, they have become more rigid and permanent.

The TJ's internal organization (*intizam*) functions like a modern franchise system, running on a strong motivational basis. The most important level of the movement's internal organization includes the TJ's traveling groups and *ijtimas* which are carefully organized by the *shura* councils

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71 See Dietrich Reetz, "The 'Faith Bureaucracy' of the Tablighi Jama'at," 98-124.

72 Reetz provides a clear outline of the TJ leadership structure in India. See Reetz, "The 'Faith Bureaucracy' of the Tablighi Jama'at," 107.

and volunteers. The traveling group, which is led by an elected *amir*,[73] is the lowest but most fundamental level of the lay movement.

Following the traveling group is the mosque group in which the *shura* is formed. The Tablighis use the imam of a Muslim community to enter the community, visit the houses (this ritual is called *gasht*), and establish a mosque-based *shura*. The *shura* of a locality establishes its presence by occupying the local mosque and dominating its activities. Various *shuras* may be in operation at the level of the town, district, province, or nationally, at the great *markaz*.[74] *Shura* members often keep their posts until they die. The appointments of important and strategic locations are decided by the country's core TJ leaders.

Once established inside the mosques, the young Tablighi *amirs* are authorized to lead the mosque's call for prayer and the *salat* (ritual prayer of supplication). At the mosques, local Muslims are mobilized for the Jama'at's traveling tours. Some of the regular members' children become volunteers in the *markaz* where they study Islamic texts and the TJ's philosophy. These youth spend their entire lives in the movement and are encouraged to pursue religious careers and to join the movement's clerical elites.

The TJ has done a great deal to revitalize the meaning and significance of the mosque. In many areas in Southeast Asia, the mosque has lost much of its appeal to the community, as its uses have become limited to Friday prayers and children's education. The TJ, in contrast, uses the mosque for accommodation, cooking, prayer and ritual, study and communion, and for preaching and *da'wa* activities. From fieldwork in Tha Sala (south Thailand), the current author has described how local elites and the TJ newcomers compete for the space of the mosque.[75] The local mosque has become an enclave of the global TJ network as the names of the incoming and outgoing Jama'at are written on the board in front of the mosque. From mosques in Tha Sala, for example, preaching groups will travel to Cambodia and China.

Next to the traveling preaching tours, the TJ's *ijtimas* constitute the heart of the movement. *Ijtimas* are of various scopes: local, regional, national, and global. The program of these congregations follows the itinerary of the preaching tours, consisting of joint prayers, inspirational talks, readings from the "Merits of Good Action" and calls for volunteers. Weekly *ijtimas* are held at the *markaz* after Friday prayers. The annual Tablighi *ijtimas*, which take place in South Asia, represent the second largest congregation of Muslims after the Hajj. Hundreds of thousands of people participate in the TJ's *ijtimas* in Tongi, Bangladesh, near Dakar, and in Raiwind, Pakistan, near Lahore. In India, the *ijtima* was held at the huge mosque *Taj-ul-Masajid* (Crown of the Mosques) in Bhopal.

The *ijtimas* have become a performance of power by sheer numbers. Politicians in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India have repeatedly used the congregations to rub shoulders with the praying Muslim millions. However, the movement's *amirs* emphasize that the TJ's regular grassroots work is more important than its huge congregations. According to these leaders, it is the non-political, quietist character of the movement that enabled the TJ to spread to every place on earth where Muslims live.[76]

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[73] Anyone can become an *amir*, provided he has the experiences of a "regular," and does not need an *ulama*. The TJ is able to spread to the masses because the TJ's leaders do not require a formal Islamic education.

[74] The great *markaz* is the main *markaz* of a province or region.

[75] See Horstmann, "The Tablighi Jama'at, Transnational Islam, and the Transformation of the Self between Southern Thailand and South Asia."

[76] The TJ's radical emphasis on grassroots recruitment, its egalitarian ethos, and its ideology of non-confrontation puts the TJ in a dialogue with other Gandhian and Christian movements that originated at the same time.

TJ Communication and Uses of the Media

The Tablighi Jama'at utilizes traditional communication resources as well as modern media to spread its message, though it condemns the influence of Western media. The TJ's leaders direct letters through the traveling preaching groups; these letters have become regular texts of the movement. At the TJ's centers, followers can purchase TJ garments and cheap audio-cassettes containing the sermons of various Tablighi intellectuals. The TJ also make use of specific Islamic websites devoted to the movement's educational and *da'wa* activities. The distribution of printed books and audio-cassettes outside the theological schools—the traditional sources for these materials—has supported the movement's egalitarian approach.

Travel reports from preaching tours are distributed as a witness to the Jama'at's heroic and divine power in difficult and sometimes traumatic situations, emphasizing the blessing and divine assistance afforded to the movement's "glorious" preachers. These travelers' tales and stories of martyrdom, known as *karguzari*,[77] play a significant role in the Tablighi experience. These stories serve, through recollection and self-examination, to educate and inspire Tablighi members. Some of the *karguzaris* have also been posted on the Internet. At one point, for example, al-Madina (www.al-madina.com) included a link, called variously "*Kar Guzari*" or "*karguzari*" to true stories in the path of Allah.[78]

Politicians in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India have repeatedly used the congregations to rub shoulders with the praying Muslim millions.

The Hizb ut-Tahrir in South and Southeast Asia and in the Middle East

The Hizb ut-Tahrir ("Liberation Party") was founded by Taqiuddin an-Nabhani in Jerusalem in 1953. An-Nabhani had trained in law at al-Azhar University, Cairo, before becoming a clerk and then judge in Amman, Jordan. The Muslim Brotherhood had a crucial impact upon an-Nabhani as he sought solutions to the problems faced by the Palestinian communities. Attracted to leftist ideologies, he sought to blend socialist ideas with an explicit Islamic agenda.[79] An-Nabhani died in 1977 and was replaced by his loyal follower Sheikh Abdul Qadeem Zaloom and then Ata abu-l-Rushta, both Palestinians.

The Hizb ut-Tahrir has spread to over 40 countries in the Islamic world. While the HT has found little support in the Arab countries, it has spread to Central Asia (Uzbekistan), Europe (United Kingdom), South and Southeast Asia (especially in Indonesia where its public relations leader, Ismail Yusanto, has been active in organizing rallies) and counts members in the hundred thousands. The movement acts as a vanguard of political Islam in the Middle East, and has

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77 Barbara Metcalf presents some of the printed versions of these travel accounts as they are published in collections of letters and writings of leading Tablighi *alim*: Metcalf, "Travelers' Tales in the Tablighi Jama'at".

78 See Metcalf, "Travelers' Tales in the Tablighi Jama'at," 140.

79 I am grateful to Greg Fealy to allow me to quote from his pioneering research on the HTI.

established Islamic networks between the Middle East, Asia and Europe. The HT also has a unifying effect in the Muslim periphery and in the European diaspora.

HT members are persecuted in Arab countries and in Central Asia because of the group's opposition to Muslim governments and its involvement in underground networks and failed coups. The HT suffered from crackdowns, extrajudicial arrests and torture in Turkey, Syria, North Africa, Russia and Uzbekistan. The HT is interested in changing governments through "thought revolution," that is, changing the thought of apolitical Muslims, training them, and winning them over for the battle against the "enemies" of Islam. The HT wants to dismantle the state of Israel which it regards as an illegal entity and Islam's largest enemy.

The HT actively uses the media, especially the Internet, to promote anti-Zionism and to "wake up" Muslims, mobilizing them for their struggle. The Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) has two *hizbiyyin* (HT member)-owned publishing houses which produce translations of foreign HT works as well as locally authored texts. The HTI also has two radio companies. The movement salutes the Palestinian suicide-bombers who die as martyrs and exploits worldwide solidarity for Palestine to depict a community of shared Muslim suffering.

As Peter Mandaville has noted, HT's methods are distinctly modern:

> Hizb ut-Tahrir's radical Islamic theology is the very antithesis of Marxist atheism, but it operates on classical Leninist lines. Core activists travel the country, setting up closed cells in towns and universities, whose members are indoctrinated in the party's beliefs and worldview. The activists move on, but the new cadre-members are left behind to infiltrate the Muslim establishment, such as established student Islamic societies, and try to take them over. For many young British Muslims HT provides a set of ready made answers to both political issues and the questions of personal identity that often draw alienated individuals to extremist organizations.[80]

One of the HT's former South Asian regional officers wrote that, through membership in the HT, "you can exchange your (marginal) South Asian identity with a global identity." Yet, the ideology of the HT is strongly bipolar, sharply distinguishing the believers from the non-believers. According to Fealy, "The desire to commit oneself to a total Islamic system of thought and action is a key element in the appeal of Hizb ut-Tahrir."

The Structure of the Hizb ut-Tahrir: Leadership and Recruitment

The Hizb ut-Tahrir maintains a central leadership headed by the movement's *amir*, Ata Ibnu Khaleel Abu Rashta. The HT does not disclose the location of its central committee. Each nation (or province) in which the HT operates possesses a 10-member council headed by a *mutamad* (regional leader). These leadership councils subdivide into smaller urban committees, led by a *naqib*, and neighborhood study circles.

The majority of HT members are tertiary students, particularly from the sciences. The HT's national leaders approach young intellectuals and encourage them to participate in full-time HT cadres. The basic HT unit is a five-member cell whose leader is an experienced HT member (*mushrif)*. In countries where the HT is banned, only the *mushrif* knows the name of other cell

[80] Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*, 129.

members. Unlike other Islamist movements,[81] the HT seems to be less interested in a mass following than in a more committed core cadre drawn from the educated urban middle class.

New members spend at least two years studying party literature before taking an oath of loyalty to the party. A separate, parallel structure exists for women. The HT's most important methods of recruitment are the *halaqah* (study group) and *dauroh*. *Dauroh* is used to introduce basic principles to new recruits and the most common course runs for 32 hours. In the *halaqah* study groups, emphasis is put on HT ideology and correct behavior. The students, referred to as *daris*, are overseen by a senior HT mentor. Those intending to become HT regulars must undergo intensive preparation over several years before they are accepted into the fold.

The Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)

In Indonesia, Hizb ut-Tahrir has a record of intellectual activity which avoids the inflammatory rhetoric of its counterparts in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. Unlike other Indonesian Islamist organizations, it has no paramilitary wing or "security units." The HT has sought to tailor its message to Indonesian conditions and, of late, has given as much emphasis to the implementation of *shari'a* as it has to the caliphate.[82] What HTI's detractors see as the utopianism and millenarianism behind the movement's caliphate aspirations, Indonesia's *hizbiyyin* regard as a signifier of their Islamic-ness.

Brought from Australia in the early 1980s, the HT has established an active base in Indonesia. It was in Australisa that Abdullah bin Nuh became acquainted with *hizbiyyin*. Abdulrahman al-Baghadi, a Lebanese who had joined the Palestinian struggle, came to Indonesia at bin Nuh's invitation to disseminate the HT's teachings. In Indonesia, President Suharto's regime would have suppressed the movement, given the HT's call for the restoration of a universal caliphate and its rejection of nationalism and state power. Therefore, the movement's first publications did not bear the HT's name and its leaders prohibited any announcement of the HT in public. Instead, the movement operated as an internal, reformist Islamic movement to avoid confrontation with the Indonesian government.

Al-Baghdadi used the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) al-Ghazali in Bogor, West Java, as his base and soon became a familiar figure, preaching to Muslim groups on the campuses of colleges such as the Bogor Agricultural Institute, the Bandung Institute of Technology, and the University of Indonesia, as well as at mosques in Java. As al-Baghdadi's following grew, he and bin Nuh began arranging more systematic recruitment and education measures.

The downfall of the Suharto regime led to HTI's emergence into public view. In early 2000, the organization held an international conference in Jakarta under the banner of the Hizb ut-Tahrir. The caliphate conference at Bung Karno stadium in Jakarta in August 2007 attracted as many as 50,000 people. HTI has rapidly established branches in urban areas throughout Indonesia and is actively recruiting and training middle-class cadres. Leading cadres in Indonesia have close interaction with the organization's center and often travel abroad. HT's center proofreads and confirms every step in HTI's policy. Thus, the global identity of the HT is liberating but also limiting HTI's expansion.

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[81] Islamists extend the idea of Islam as a total system that encapsulates all domains of society. A truly Islamic society is not only comprised of pious Muslims, but requires an Islamic state.

[82] See Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, *Joining the Caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2005), 33. A revised version of this work was published as Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the *Middle East and Indonesia*, The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Analysis Paper Number 9 (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 2005).

The Tablighi Jama'at and Hizb ut-Tahrir in Comparison with South and Southeast Asian Naqshabandiyah and Khalidiyah Orders

The TJ's global pietist movement and the HT's global Islamist movement can be fruitfully compared to the Naqshabandiyah and Khalidiyah Sufi brotherhoods. Although the TJ and the HT are reformist movements seeking to purify Islamic ritual and *shari'a* from the "heretic" practices of the traditional Sufi brotherhoods, the TJ retains some of the key practices of Islamic mysticism, although in a very constrained and controlled space. Furthermore, the TJ and the HT have borrowed the Sufi orders' hierarchical forms of organization and, in particular, their practice of total loyalty to the sheikh or *amir* in the orders' secretive cells, national committees, and Islamic centers.

While the global Sufi cult of Zindapir[83] and the Barelvi glorify the shrines of saints who embody Allah's divine power, the Deobandi educational movement and the TJ consider the glorification of saints as *bida* and strongly rely on the *shari'a*. However, the TJ and HT retain the Sufi's powerful disciple-teacher relationship,[84] and the TJ retains the sacralization of space through the ritualization of everyday life. While the TJ distances itself from the mystical exercises of the Sufi brotherhoods, preaching and the social construction of Islamic piety are absolutely crucial for the movement's operations and success.

Sufis have traditionally repeated the *hijra* (the migration of the prophet to Medina). The TJ emulates the Prophet in a permanent *hijra* by revitalizing the significance of the hadith through traveling and preaching around the globe. By constructing ever new Islamic centers, and by circulating ever new *Jama'at,* the TJ aims to stamp the earth with the name of Allah. Ritualizing the environment, the TJ acts not unlike the South Asian immigrants during the 'Urs procession in Birmingham.[85]

In the center of the Sufi cult is the charismatic saint. In the TJ, the sheikh is replaced by the *alim* (teacher) or *amir* and, in the HT, by the *mushrif*. In the TJ and HT, the disciple undergoes years of indoctrination and devotes increasing time to the movement. These movements' followers are also expected to donate part of their income to the movement and its *da'wa* missionary activities.[86]

The Salafi Movements and Saudi Sponsorship in South and Southeast Asia

To a lesser degree, the Salafi movements and the Salafi-affiliated charity organizations and mosques in South and Southeast Asia also constitute a closely-knit community. However, while the global Sufi cult of Zindapir is built on a labor of love, and the TJ and HT are built on donations, time and sacrifices, Saudi-sponsored Salafi movements are driven by the puritanical, scriptural positions of Wahhabism. The 1970s witnessed Saudi Arabia's increasing sponsorship of Wahhabi organizations in South and Southeast Asia. Saudi funds for Muslim institutions in

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83 Werbner has written an ethnography of a global Naqshbandi order founded by a living saint, Zindapir, whose luxurious lodge nestles in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province. See Pnina Werbner, *Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003). During the saint's lifetime, his cult extended globally to Britain and Europe, the Middle East and Southern Africa.

84 According to the Sufis, a *murid* (a pupil and disciple) is a lover who seeks intimacy with his sheikh and with God.

85 See Werbner, *Pilgrims of Love*, 32.

86 The vitality of global Sufi brotherhoods, shrines, and pilgrimage is shown in numerous studies. For a brilliant introduction to the vitality of Sufi spirituality, see Pnina Werbner and Helene Basu, *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and the Embodiment of Emotion in Sufi Cults* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

South and Southeast Asia have come through a variety of channels: the Saudi state; the Muslim World League (*Rabita al-Alam al-Islami*); the Institute for Guidance, Mission, and Direction; and private donors (mostly wealthy sheikhs attached to the Saudi dynasty). The Iranian revolution also served as a major catalyst in molding Saudi Arabian foreign policy for which the official Wahhabi interpretation of Islam emerged as a key instrument.

Saudi-sponsored educational and *da'wa* movements in South and Southeast Asia, promoting the principles of *tawhid* (oneness of God), produced a new type of Middle Eastern graduate who would be crucial to the spread of Wahhabism under the banner of the Salafi *da'wa*.[87] Lavishly Saudi-financed educational and *da'wa* activities in Indonesia expanded dramatically in the 1980s. Many Indonesian students studying in Saudi Arabia with scholarships from the kingdom volunteered in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union in the 1980s.[88] Wahhabi institutions have been set up in southern Thailand, Mindanao, and in Jakarta in order to spread the influence of Saudi Arabian Wahhabism in Southeast Asia.

Perhaps the key institution of Saudi-sponsored Islamic education in Indonesia is the Indonesian Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences (LIPIA), a branch of the Al-Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh. Alongside a Salafist disposition, LIPIA also has Muslim Brotherhood influences.[89] LIPIA has succeeded in producing hundreds of graduates who are able to continue their studies in Saudi Arabia. Graduates of LIPIA have become leading figures in the Indonesian Salafist movement and are particularly prominent as publishers, preachers, teachers and *ulama*. LIPIA graduates have gone on to establish Salafist *pesantren*, often with Saudi funding.

The inflow of Saudi Arabian influence has come to Indonesia mainly through the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiya Indonesia*, DDII). Together with LIPIA, DDII provides scholarships for young Indonesian Muslims to study at Middle Eastern institutions.[90] Saudi largesse is also used for the construction of mosques, orphanages, and charity organizations.

The number of Salafi-oriented publishing houses has risen sharply in recent years; these publishing houses have a growing presence in the mainstream Islamic market. The importance of the Internet as a tool for the transmission of ideas is particularly strong among Salafist groups in South and Southeast Asia. Salafist groups have tended to embrace the Internet, because it offers a generic and de-cultured Islamic identity.[91]

In India, the Saudi connection boosted the influence of the Ahl-i Hadith who denounced fellow Sunni from the Barelvi movement as apostates and the leaders of the TJ as *kafirs*. Saudi money did much to strengthen and to radicalize the Ahl-i Hadith in India and to aggravate inter-

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87 Unlike other reformist, modernist Muslim organizations that have emerged across the Muslim world, the Salafi *da'wa* movement is squarely situated within the puritanical Salafi-Wahhabi tradition, marked by its concern with matters of creed and morality, such as strict monotheism, divine attributes, the purification of Islam from accretions, anti-Sufism, and the development of the moral integrity of the individual.

For further information on Salafi movements, see Noorhaidi Hasan, "The Salafi Movement in Indonesia: Transnational Dynamics and Local Development," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, 1 (2007): 83-94; Thomas McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); and Yoginder Sikand, "Stoking the Flames: Intra-Muslim Rivalries in India and the Saudi Connection," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, 1 (2007): 95-108.

88 Hasan, "The Salafi Movement in Indonesia," 90.

89 Bubalo and Fealy, *Joining the Caravan?*, 21.

90 DDII also played a key role in popularizing Muslim Brotherhood thought, translating a number of seminal MB texts in the late 1970s and 1980s, the most popular of which was Sayyid Qutb's "Signposts" (Bubalo and Fealy, *Joining the Caravan?* 23). Many of the students sent to Al-Azhar by DDII took the opportunity to study Brotherhood thinking and its organizational methods. DDII funded intensive training sources for Muslim tertiary students that drew heavily upon Brotherhood principles.

91 These sites abound; see, for example, www.salafi.net.

Muslim rivalries.[92] Saudi finance to Indian Ahl-i Hadith institutions has also determined the contents of the vast literature they produce and distribute. The growing influence of Wahhabism that the Ahl-i Hadith promotes has widened the cultural chasm between Muslims and Hindus in India. Further, the virulently anti-Shia and anti-Sufi propaganda seeks to denounce groups related to the Shia or Sufi mysticism as outside the pale of Islam.

Salafi Da'wa and Radicalism in Indonesia

While the Salafi *da'wa* movement generally distances itself from political activity, a radical Salafi wing in Indonesia has propagated violent jihad against targets perceived as threats to Islam. Following the collapse of Indonesia's New Order regime in 1998, the radical wing of the Salafi *da'wa* movement founded the Forum for Communication of the Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet (*Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah,* FKAWJ). Subsequently, FKAWJ issued a resolution to call on Indonesian Muslims to fight jihad in the Moluccas, a province in eastern Indonesia that had been afflicted by communal violence. FKAWJ eventually sent hundreds of troops under the name of the Laskar Jihad (Jihad Force) to fight the Christians, thereby contributing to the escalation of communal violence.

Concluding Remarks

The negative response to Western modernity is not sufficient to explain the global rise of Islamic movements either in the West or in the developing world. A more convincing thesis is that global Islamic movements provide certain modern solutions and platforms for geographically and socially mobile subjects. The global Islamic movements have something to offer: they provide their followers a meaning in life. These movements forge communities in which young Muslims experience a sense of fulfillment. The global Sufi cult and numerous urban cults in India and Indonesia provide crucial moral support and spiritual guidance in a confusing world.

By joining transnational Islamic networks, Muslims from the most marginal societies in South and Southeast Asia are brought to the forefront of the globalized Islamic community.

By joining transnational Islamic networks, Muslims from the most marginal societies in South and Southeast Asia are brought to the forefront of the globalized Islamic community. Participation in these movements gives downtrodden masses the status of faithful members of the *umma*, lending prestige and psychological uplift. Islamic piety, ideology, and ritual are at the center of the believer's imagination whose agency is shaped and nullified by the movement's leadership. As social or political movements or religious sects, these movements can thus be conceptualized as total institutions and disciplinary agents

[92] Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at.*

that impact on the consciousness and agency of the individual.[93] The individual gives nothing less than his life in the hands of the Islamic teacher or *amir* to whom he owes total loyalty.

Every Muslim society in South and Southeast Asia is intimately linked to the diverse sources of ideas and debate in the Islamic world and consequently subject to its many internal reverberations. This paper has outlined the structures, ideologies, and influences of key transnational Islamic actors and movements active throughout these regions. Both global Sufi cults and new religious movements such as the Tablighi Jama'at and the Hizb ut-Tahrir seem to thrive on the liberalism and pluralism of secular states. Both the TJ and the HT regard the secular states governing Muslim communities as puppets of the West that have to be replaced by Islamic states. But before the TJ and HT can realize this dream, they must preach, recruit, and mobilize cadres for their future utopias.

Scholars have repeatedly used the dichotomous frame of "traditionalist" versus "reformist"[94] to describe the internal debates over authorititative interpretations of Islam in South and Southeast Asia. The new reality of the revivalist movements, however, questions the clear divide between these traditional categories. Transnational Islamic actors now make use of the old and the new, of Sufi and neo-fundamentalist[95] elements of jihad, in a synthesis of Sufi brotherhoods and new revivalist movements. Appreciating this interplay of ideas is crucial to understanding Islam throughout South and Southeast Asia and the world today.

The rise of the TJ in South Asia is massive. The TJ's *ijtimas* in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan count among the largest Muslim congregations after the Hajj. Likewise, the HT is able to mobilize tens of thousands of Muslims for its political cause. The phenomenal rise of these new transnational Islamic movements, however, should not lead us to the conclusion that the majority of Muslims feel overwhelmingly attracted to the new identity offered by these movements. In fact, Muslim society in South and Southeast Asia is highly fragmented and also increasingly polarized as the traditional Sufi shrine-based brotherhoods, combining old and new elements, and the reformist movements continue to compete for Muslim spaces.

Policy Implications

We turn now to draw attention to some of the significant policy implications emerging from this paper's findings:

Policymakers should avoid confusing transnational pietist movements with militant groups. The persecution of nonviolent transnational movements like the TJ and HT is counterproductive: banning them will only give impetus to radicalization. While transnational Islamic movements like the TJ and HT are political in the way they indoctrinate their followings, they are nonviolent. The rhetoric of hatred and anti-Americanism within these movements, however, remains a topic

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93 The aim of these revivalist transnational movements is to produce "complete" or "total" Muslims (*kaaffah*). This requires a distinctive expression of lifestyle such as veils for women and beards for men and a preference for alternative Muslim forms of music (*nasyid*). For movements such as the TJ, the majority of Muslims are considered to be Muslim only by name. Most Muslims are seen to be stuck in a state of ignorance, decline, *bida* (innovation), and *shirk* (idolatry). According to the revivalist movements, these Muslims have to strengthen their faith.

94 Or *Kaum Tua* versus *Kaum Muda*, as these categories are known in areas of Southeast Asia: in the Malay world, *Kaum Tua* describes the traditionalists, while *Kaum Muda* describes the modernists.

95 Olivier Roy uses the term "neo-fundamentalist" to describe the growing individualization of Muslims and their tendency to embrace radical Islamic slogans. As Roy argues, what makes neo-fundamentalists new is that they are dealing with a new situation in which religion finds itself "de-territorialized". De-territorialization can also be experienced by Muslims who have not migrated, in the sense that the Westernization of their own societies leaves some Muslims feeling that they are in a minority similar to, say, Muslim migrants in Europe. See Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam. The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

of serious concern. Some studies argue that the TJ has provided support for militants or that militants use the TJ to operate undercover. However, this line of thought does not recognize the philosophy and spirit of the TJ as the TJ, in fact, rejects any form of violence.

Pietist movements should be provided suitable channels of expression. Many Muslims (in India, southern Thailand, Mindanao, Cambodia, and Vietnam, for example) suffer from discrimination, political exclusion or harassment. The best strategy is to provide these communities with suitable channels for religious worship and political participation, so that these Muslims can openly fulfill their political and spiritual aspirations. Repressive or discriminatory measures will only create hatred and resentment among Muslim communities.

Leave the Muslim public to Muslim players. Policymakers should not try to manipulate players in the Islamic field by infiltrating Islamic organizations or privileging others through financing. Attempts to manipulate Muslim organizations will likely only invite more trouble.

Involve transnational Islamic actors in the democratic process. When Pakistan's Jama'at-i Islami, for example, entered the democratic process, the JI had to change much of its revolutionary program. The JI has since given up the idea of grabbing power through an Islamic revolution from above, and has gradually developed a much more moderate and pragmatic approach to win a democratic majority in the elections. Groups like the JI cannot afford to stay outside of society as vanguards of Islamic change, but have to open up to the broader population while being held accountable for their actions. Bringing Islamic parties and movements throughout South and Southeast Asia into the democratic process could present such dividends.

In focusing on the global, policymakers should not lose sight of the local. The flood of Islamic media, clothes and ideas is a veritable cultural revolution in the Islamic world. Travel and communication have facilitated the transmission of ideas across the world. However, transnational Islamic ideas and movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, TJ and HT are being localized and indigenized at the same time. The TJ in India and Malaysia are not the same. The HT in Palestine and Indonesia differ. The branch offices of the global movements have to adjust to the specific political context of each country. Consequently, policymakers should be alert to these local differences while attempting to craft effective and nuanced solutions.

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Migrants, Mujahidin, Madrassa Students: The Diversity of Transnational Islam in Pakistan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper explores the diversity of transnational Islam in Pakistan. The paper argues that most of Pakistan's transnational Islamic actors are tied to economic, cultural and religious forms of globalization. The radical and militant forms of transnational Islam in the country are largely driven by factors directly linked to Pakistan's political and security apparatuses. It is suggested that the increase in militant activities in Pakistan stems from the reluctance or inability of Pakistan's government to introduce firm standards of law and civility. The paper contends that networks centered on Islamic scholarship or Pakistan's identity, are not *per se* violent or threatening, but reflect the religious, cultural and ethnic concerns of an expanding global diaspora of South Asian Muslims.

MAIN FINDINGS

Pakistan has become a major hub of transnational Islam in the region with intense in- and outbound activity rooted in its culture, history and politics. Pakistan's transnational Islamic actors largely emanate from competition between distinct religio-cultural milieus, the most important of which are the Deobandis, the Barelwis, Jama'at-i Islami, the Ahl-i Hadith, the Ahmadiyya and the Muhajirs. Transnational Islam in Pakistan can be distinguished by the different types of religio-political issues it pursues: 1) security and ideology, 2) religious mobilization, and 3) Pakistani nationalist identity. Mainly group one constitutes an abiding threat. The unstable, charged and polarized nature of the overall political framework in Pakistan pushes many transnational actors into the political, extremist and even militant realm. Currently, the major threat to the stability of Pakistan comes from sectarian and jihadi groups that spin out of control from state and religious patronage. The doctrines and politics of sectarianism as expressed in the antagonism between various Pakistani Islamic groups in the struggle for the "true" Islam have heavily contributed to the radicalization of transnational Islamic actors in the country. Religio-cultural networks focused on madrassas (Deobandis, Barelwis), missionary work (Tablighis, Da'wat-i Islami) or political mobilization (Jama'at-i Islami) have their own rationale of expansion and do not necessarily pose threats.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Pakistan cannot successfully fight the Pakistani Taliban as long as some elements in the administration hope to keep intact this militant network for operation against India and the Karzai government. Neither can Pakistan achieve success as long as it does not address the tribal dimension of this warfare successfully since much of current Taliban operations reflect long-standing disaffected and marginalized tribal concerns.
- The Pakistani state needs to resurrect its civil authority and regulate civil institutions without discriminating against them. It will further have to focus on the social rehabilitation and development of disaffected communities giving rise to militant Islam, with education, employment and social amenities holding prime importance.
- Pakistan and international agencies should be discouraged from punishing transnational actors of Islam for their efforts of religious mobilization as such behavior appears to be counterproductive.
- While some political analysts believe that the madrassa system is one major source of instability, religious education will always have to remain religious in nature. Educational standards can only be improved by lifting Pakistani public education in a major way.

Recent news about the abiding tension and violence in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Kashmir on the borders with Pakistan has again drawn international attention to transnational actors of Islam operating from Pakistan's territory. But can these transnational actors be uniformly considered a threat and is their virulence and violence related to their religious affiliation? Is all transnational Islam dangerous and why is so much of its activity associated with Pakistan?

Today it is an established fact that Pakistan has become a major international locus and hub of transnational Islamic networks and institutions. These networks and institutions have exercised various degrees of influence on the political and security situation in and around Pakistan. Their impact has grown continuously, particularly since the 1980s. Although most of these forces and networks are now well known through international media coverage and the academic literature, for many observers of international politics—and also of international Islam—the prominence of transnational Islam in Pakistan may still seem paradoxical considering its remote location and the often culturalist connotation of its body politics. To understand why Pakistan, coming from a rather particularist background in terms of its geography, politics and culture, plays such a prominent role in a universalist issue such as today's transnational Islam, this paper intends to discuss:

Today it is an established fact that Pakistan has become a major international locus and hub of transnational Islamic networks and institutions.

- the historical background of this development, with a special emphasis on structural factors installing transnational activism in Pakistan's modern social and political system;
- the structure of this activism with regard to the nature and direction of the religio-political issues involved; and
- the main types of transnational actors and institutions in Pakistan and their relations to the issues driving them.

This explanation will be prefaced by a brief discussion of the nexus between transnationalism and Islam and an introduction of transnational actors of Islam in Pakistan.

Transnationalism and Islam

In general, and even more so in relation to Pakistan, the nature of the transnational activism of Islamic actors and institutions needs to be seen in a rather nuanced light. This analysis here is based on the assumption that religious practice and knowledge alone are hardly responsible for transnational activism in the sense of crossing national borders in and out of Pakistan.

If looked at closely, such transnational activity constitutes only a part of their activism;[96] and is more often than not driven by sociological, political, ideological, ethnic and cultural concerns that are equally shared with non-Islamic actors and institutions.[97]

Transnational Actors and Institutions of Islam

The major players in this field are networks of religious scholars and schools with their religious and political groups and parties creating separate traditions or milieus within Pakistani (and South Asian) Islam that go back to centers and activists in north India before independence. These milieus have acquired partly hereditary endogamous features of sects or clans with a large and continuously growing number of subsidiary outlets (see Appendix I). Their missionary efforts are directed as much at non-Muslims as at each other in the struggle for a larger share and control of the "Islamic field."

Deobandi. The Deobandi scholars and schools refer to the purist and reformist interpretation of Sunni Islam of the Hanafi law school formulated at the Darul Ulum of Deoband in north India, which was founded in 1867. It has now spread through an estimated 2000 schools in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh each. The Deobandi cultural style has been frugal and text-based, fighting against "impermissible innovations" (*bida'*) and for the "true Islam." This leads the Deobandis to polemical attacks at most other traditions of Islam, but also against non-Muslims. Their political approach is split between oppositional polemics and a pietist yearning for learning. The Deobandi political party, the Jami'yat-e Ulama-e Islam (JUI, Party of Scholars of Islam, founded in 1944), is the largest component of the Muttahida Majlis-e Amal (MMA), an alliance of Pakistani religious parties founded in 2001. The JUI attracted international attention for its close relations with the Afghan Taliban, sharing with them a reliance on Deobandi doctrine.[98]

Barelwi. These groups relate to the devotional tradition of Sufi-related Sunni scholars and schools that centered on the activities of Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi (1856-1921) in the town of Bareilly in north India. The Barelwis have probably expanded within similar parameters as the Deobandis. The Barelwis' main *raison d'être* was the defense of spiritual rituals against the reformist critique of the Deobandis and others. Doctrine-wise, their differences are small as both follow orthodox adherence (*taqlid*) to the Hanafi law school. But the Barelwis emphasize Sufi traditions such as special praise for the Prophet, and the worship of saints and their shrines, all of which they justify with reference to the Quran and the Prophetic traditions, the Hadith. Their cultural style has been exuberant, and their politics were often marked by loyalty to the powers that be during the colonial period and, afterwards, the independent secular state. In the political

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[96] Nearly all madrassa and mosque networks fit this understanding as local worship and the local transmission of religious knowledge and practice dominate their activities.

[97] A good example for this understanding is the missionary movement of the Tablighi Jama'at (TJ): its main objective, the reconversion of Muslims, does not *per se* require the expansion of activities to other countries, but can be equally achieved by local efforts. It is rather the sociological group dynamics of leadership, control and competition in the Islamic field that drive the TJ around the globe. The same approach is shared by other non-Islamic religious groups from South Asia of Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Buddhist denomination. This would also belie the assumption that it is monotheistic aspirations of universalist salvation that are reflected in such patterns of behavior. The religious traditions just mentioned are polytheistic and often local in the nature of their worship and practice. Also, non-religious actors have adopted the same pattern, as can be seen from the tendency of Pakistan's political parties to establish foreign branches. During the current author's recent field research in Barcelona, Spain, it was learnt that the Pakistani community there also comprises a unit of the Nawaz Sharif Muslim League. The creation of Pakistan community associations there including even a radio station would make the same point.

[98] See, Dietrich Reetz, "The Deoband Universe: What makes a transcultural and transnational educational movement of Islam?" in "South-South linkages in Islam," eds. Dietrich Reetz and Bettina Dennerlein, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 1 (2007), 139-159; and Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

arena the Barelwis are represented by the Jami'yat-e Ulama-e Pakistan (JUP, Party of Religious Scholars of Pakistan, founded in 1948).[99]

Jama'at-i Islami. The rather modernist Jama'at-i Islami (JI, Islamic Party) network centers on the JI political party created in British India in 1941 and the legacy of its founder Abu'l A'la Maududi (1903-79). The JI is an important political player in Pakistan and Bangladesh, while remaining a cultural and religious organization in India. Their cultural style is modern and technical, while their political approach is issue-based and power-oriented. The JI's objective is to establish political and cultural hegemony, to form the government and rule the country in much the same way as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did in India, which has greatly inspired them.

Ahl-i Hadith. The Ahl-i Hadith (AH, People of the Tradition) scholars and schools represent a minority purist Sunni sect rejecting all Islamic law schools but privileging the Prophetic traditions (Hadith). The AH formed in the north Indian provinces of Punjab and United Provinces at the turn of the 20th century. The AH is known for its strong orientation towards Saudi Arabia and affiliation with Salafi networks. The AH party (Markazi Ahl-i Hadith) consists of several factions. The AH network is polarized between a scholarly and a more radical, militant wing.[100]

Shia. The Shia scholars and groups of Pakistan form an important contestant of the Islamic field representing around 15% of all Muslims. Their influence on Pakistan's politics and culture can be traced back to their longstanding share in Muslim culture and politics in the subcontinent, partly through the Shia-dominated principalities and landholders in the late colonial period. The formation of the Tahrik-e Jafariyya-e Pakistan (TJP, Movement for the Introduction of the Shia Legal Code in the Tradition of Imam Jafar) in 1979 marked a turning point in Shia mobilization in Pakistan as Shia activists felt strongly encouraged by the Iranian revolution. Many Shia organizations are still closely connected with Iranian institutions, but also with Shia groups in neighboring countries such as Afghanistan and India, as with migrant communities abroad. Their political agenda is shaped by their desire to secure safe minority rights, to uphold traditional influence and to resist doctrinal pressures from the Sunni majority with defiance.[101]

Ahmadiyya. The minority sect of the Ahmadiyya founded by Ghulam Ahmad Mirza (1839-1908) also emerged in Punjab province in the late colonial period. Most mainstream Muslim groups regard the Ahmadiyya as heretic. It is particularly the claims of the Ahmadiyya's founder, and his successors to some degree, of Prophethood that have enraged radical Sunni Muslim activists. A constitutional amendment declared the Ahmadis non-Muslims in 1974. The Ahmadis sometimes face violent repression in Pakistan, but have proven enormously resilient, particularly relying on their strong global missionary activities. For Ahmadis, calling themselves Muslim was made a criminal offence under Zia's Islamist dictatorship through amendments of the Penal Code in 1982-86.[102] In spite of strong political and religious pressures, they still

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[99] Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and his Movement, 1870-1920* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[100] Martin Riexinger, *Sanaullah Amritsari (1868-1948) und die Ahl-i-Hadis im Punjab unter britischer Herrschaft* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2004).

[101] Alessandro Monsutti, Silvia Naef, and Farian Sabahi. T*he Other Shiites: From the Mediterranean to Central Asia*, Worlds of Islam, v. 2 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

[102] Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Ordinance, I of 1982; Anti-Islamic Activities of Qadiani Group, Lahori Group and Ahmadis (Prohibition and Punishment) Ordinance, XX of 1984; Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 111 of 1986; amending paragraphs 295 and 298 on offences relating to religion. Cf. Pakistan Penal Code, at http://www.punjabpolice.gov.pk/user_files/File/pakistan_penal_code_xlv_of_1860.pdf, accessed August 15, 2008.

manage to uphold a traditional presence among the middle classes and in the administration, including the security forces.[103]

Muhajirs. The Muhajirs (migrants) form yet another religio-cultural milieu irrespective of their strong heterogeneity. They descended from migrants from India's Muslim minority provinces—mainly from Delhi, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh—speaking Urdu as their mother tongue—unlike the local population in today's Pakistan. Today, the Muhajirs exercise their religious and political influence largely through the political party of the Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM, National Migrant Front, founded in 1984), its numerous wings and institutions. The Muhajir population share is about 8%;[104] the MQM currently holds 25 seats in parliament.[105] MQM's ideology is outwardly based on secularist notions of "practicality" though still marked by a religious background ranging from modernism to spiritual, local Islam. The MQM opposes the politicized Islam of the JI and the Deobandis. They are based primarily in urban Sindh—mainly Karachi and Haiderabad. Many leading representatives of the Pakistani administration and the security establishment have a Muhajir background, including the former presidents and military dictators, the generals Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf. The MQM is the third-largest party in Pakistan, switching allegiances between the two major parties, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League wing led by Nawaz Sharif (PML-N).[106]

These religious traditions and networks expanded into separate religio-cultural milieus with a large number of derivative organizations and institutions. For the propagation of their interpretation of Islam, they created NGO-type institutions devoted to religious education and missionary activities. The most widely known subsidiary Deobandi network is the pietist missionary movement of the Tablighi Jama'at that was founded near Delhi in 1926 but has since spread around the globe. In the political field, we find parties run by religious scholars (*ulama*) of all persuasions. The JI and the MQM are political parties in their own right. Several spawned or hosted youth, student and women's groups, while some affiliated sectarian and militant outfits, so-called jihadi groups, originally serving as party militias.

Historical Background

The impact of transnational Islam on Pakistan can hardly be understood without considering major historical factors in its evolution that were already transnational in their own way. Against this background, it is probably not surprising that transnational Islam has come to play such a prominent role with regard to Pakistan. We are faced here with the evolution of a country that emerged from a multinational colonial empire, and went through two painful partitions of statehood—first, of British India in 1947 and, second, of the larger Pakistan state in 1971. And we are looking at Pakistan as the inheritor of traditions of South Asian Islam that had politically ruled for more than 600 years over vast territories of the subcontinent despite the minority status

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[103] Simon Ross Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice* (London: Hurst & Co., 2008); and, Dietrich Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere: Religious Groups in India*, 1900-1947 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[104] See, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan#Demographics, accessed August 20, 2008.

[105] Election Commission of Pakistan, National Assembly, Party Positions Including Reserved Seats. See, http://www.ecp.gov.pk/NAPosition.pdf, accessed 20 August 2008.

[106] Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

of Islam, cutting across various state formations through history and the geographic expanses of the South Asian lands.

The culture, religion and politics of Pakistan had crossed national and state borders as a matter of inherent being. Pakistan's ideological nature—venturing to provide a home to Muslims in South Asia—aspired to a symbolic negation of state boundaries. Yet the political and ideological forces ruling the country resurrected nationalist concerns by marrying the two seemingly irreconcilable elements of an in- and outside orientation in the doctrine of the so-called *Pakistan ideology*, which was oriented towards the nation-state and also pointing beyond it at the same time. This ideology was based on the concept of Muslim nationalism that assumed Muslims in British India, as a religious community, were legally entitled to a nation-state of their own.[107]

This historical process created structural elements that installed cross-border interaction in the body politics of Pakistan on a permanent basis. To understand these dynamics it is proposed here to consider the role of: 1) migrants; 2) partition of the subcontinent; and 3) the subcontinent's cultural fragmentation.

Looking at it from today's perspective, *migrants* played a key role in the transmission of South Asian cultural, religious and political influences. The near-global, multi-national and multi-cultural nature of the British colonial empire was a major factor in this. Migrants from the subcontinent created a backbone for the expansion of cultural, ethnic and religious networks from South Asia, first across the British Empire and, later, much beyond, wherever new migrants went. The British Empire—and colonial rule in general—represented its own form of forced historical globalization. Labor migration from South Asia across the Empire was popular and common, but so was migration for commercial, political or social reasons.

While previously it was said that the sun would never set over the territories of the British Empire, today this saying has been rephrased by Indian politicians in charge of overseas Indians to the sun never sets down on the Indian diaspora[108] which, by extension, would also apply to Pakistani and other South Asian diasporas. This influence can be traced back further to trading castes from areas such as Gujarat which had prefigured such transnational flows by their outward expansion well before the British ruled over the subcontinent. South Asian traders went to Southeast Asia, to East and South Africa, and also to Europe.

The emergence of Pakistan through the *partition* of the subcontinent in the name of Islam introduced another structural element generating transnational activism. As the ideological and political headquarters of most Islamic actors had been located in north India, they were forced through partition to relocate to what is today Pakistan and Bangladesh. In this process they had to adapt to geopolitical change, and to replicate and multiply their activities in a transnational and transcultural context. For many of them, such as the Deobandis, Tablighis and Barelwis, this valuable experience constituted a blueprint for further expansion at a later stage. It also imbued them with an ideological mission that in many ways drove them beyond the geographical and political confines of their regions and countries of origin. As the process of partition radicalized political, religious and ethnic actors, religious and ethnic militias were further strengthened, creating an awareness and experience of militia violence as being a suitable or potentially successful tool to compete and fight for cultural and political influence and supremacy.

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[107] Cf. Reetz, *Islam in the Public Sphere*, 35f.

[108] The Chairman of High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, Dr. L. M. Singhvi, at a media briefing on November 1, 2002: "I have often said that the Sun never sets on the Indian diaspora from Fiji to Canada around the world." At http://www.meaindia.nic.in/mediainteraction/2002/11/01m01.htm, accessed June 17, 2008.

The cultural and religious fragmentation of the subcontinent had, early on, introduced a high degree of competition and infighting not only between various traditions and cultural norms, but also within such formations. Thus, Muslim groups and publics multiplied since the mid-19th century, vying with each other for domination among Muslims and further competing with other religious, cultural and secular groups. The combination of Islamic mobilization with the cultural pluralism of colonial India and the specific ways of introducing political modernity during the colonial era led to *competitive cultural mobilization* that took a leaf out of caste- and clan-based politics. This competitive mobilization fully extended to the Islamic field and expanded beyond geographical borders on the back of migratory and trading flows as well as universalist ambitions.

Issues and Directions of Transnational Islam in Pakistan

As the factors responsible for the evolution of Pakistan's transnational Islamic activism already suggest, its structure is very heterogeneous. To make sense of this structure it is suggested here to distinguish between different types of religio-political issues and the direction of transnational activities. Such differentiation owes much to the historical influences discussed before. The rise and growing impact of transnational Islam in Pakistan can be traced back to issues rooted in the historical antecedents of Pakistan's statehood as it emerged from the partition of the South Asian subcontinent as a "homeland for Indian Muslims." Consequently, it also took different directions, vacillating between regional and global orientation.

In many ways this transnationalism was prefigured by the role and structure of Indian Islamic activism before independence as represented by the madrassa networks of competing Islamic schools and interpretations of the Deobandi, Barelwi, Ahl-i Hadith, or Ahmadi variety. While most of this mobilization proceeded on a pietist and self-consciously religious trajectory, part of it was pushed in a decidedly political direction by the impact of Pakistan's military and bureaucratic establishment. Consequently, it is suggested here to discuss transnational Islam in Pakistan from three different angles relating to the nature of the religio-political activism:

Security- and ideology-related issues. These are issues that Pakistan's military and intelligence establishment—for a significant period as an international ally of the United States and other Western countries—was involved and/or constituted the driving force behind their prevalence. These issues would include the regional conflicts in Afghanistan and Kashmir, but also pan-Islamist ambitions and activities towards other neighboring countries and regions, such as India and Iran, post-Soviet Central Asia and China's Xinjiang province. Actors within this category mainly date from the late 1970s and would include radical Islamic militants, with sectarian outfits forming an important sub-grouping, as well as radical madrassas and charities established under political tutelage during the Afghan civil war and its aftermath.

Religious Islamic activism. Islamic activism primarily originated in late colonial India. It extended into Pakistan and expanded from South Asia on the back of South Asian migrants and trading communities across the world. This group would include faith-based religious and pietist networks such as the Deobandi, Tablighi, Barelwi, Jama'at-i Islami, Ahl-i Hadith and Ahmadi varieties.

Pakistan-specific activism. Nationalist and localized activism pursued by Islamist institutions and globalizing networks are primarily rooted in or increasingly driven by Pakistan's social and political life. This category encompasses a diversity of group actors and networks that self-

consciously operate from or through the nation-state of Pakistan as their home base. Some of them are clear representatives of political Islamism. They would include the Jama'at-i Islami and the (Mirpuri) Kashmir support groups. Others are educational, pietist or devotional networks, examples of which would be the International Islamic Universities, the modern educational Barelwi network of the Minhaj-ul-Quran, the Barelwi missionary movement of the Da'wat-i Islami, Sufi scholars and their disciples. They combine their pan-Islamic or universalist ambitions with a clear association to Pakistani nationalist, and sometimes, local identity.

Nationalist and localized activism pursued by Islamist institutions and globalizing networks are primarily rooted in or increasingly driven by Pakistan's social and political life.

If we assume that transnationalism can be perceived on different trajectories and dimensions, we would base this classification on the understanding that these variations are united by the fact of crossing the border of the nation-state as a regular part of their activism or existence. Different Islamic actors, institutions and concepts—elements of the public sphere, of a multiple process of public mobilization in the name of Islam—have imbibed this transnationalism in various ways. In a larger sense, every self-conscious Islamic actor is transnational pointing to the larger Muslim community—or *Ummah*—as the frame of reference. It is proposed here to differentiate those actors also according to the more dominant element and character of their transnational orientation:

1. A transnational **global** orientation is **constitutive** for the movement. This would apply to the Tablighi Jama'at as it regards itself pursuing a global religious mission. To a lesser extent also other faith-based, pietist movements such as the religious traditions of the Deobandis, Barelwis, Ahl-i Hadith, Shia or Ahmadiyya do not relate themselves to state boundaries or nationalities but develop a global perspective.
2. A transnational **regional** orientation is **constitutive** for the movement. This applies to most jihadi outfits driven by the regional conflicts of Kashmir, Afghanistan, and to a lesser extent Central Asia.
3. Transnational (religious) orientation is **derivative** of connections with **Muslim migrant** communities. This can be observed on the Kashmiri (Mirpuri) migrant groups operating in Britain, North America and mainland Europe. It is also a striking feature of the networks related to the Barelwi tradition such as the Minhaj-ul-Quran or the missionary movement of the Da'wat-i Islami.
4. A transnational **political and ideological** outlook is constitutive for them, of which their transnational activism is **derivative.** Groups such as the Jama'at-i Islami, but also the Ahl-i Hadith strongly follow their ideological agenda when they cross Pakistan's borders, even though their migrant affiliations will also play out. But their ideological slant allows them to transcend the limitations of their origins and attract followers of other ethnic

and national background—for example, the Jama'at-i Islami to their brand of mainstream political Islamism, and the Ahl-i Hadith to Salafism.

Radical Islamic Militancy

In order to establish the (political) virulence of transnational Islam in Pakistan, Islamic networks have to be seen and understood as multi-faceted social, cultural and political networks, which may show a major thrust in one direction while still being driven in other directions. There is a strong belief that transnational Islamic activism from Pakistan's soil may never have reached the political and security dimensions it has acquired today without the intervention of Pakistan's military and bureaucratic establishment. The basis of intervention was a certain confluence—but certainly no identity—in the ideological orientation of these political and religious actors towards Islamist universalism. Pakistan's military and bureaucratic establishment derived its political legitimacy from the so-called Pakistan ideology and its related "Muslim nationalism" which was a variant of pan-Islamic mobilization.

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It was particularly General Zia-ul-Haq who, with the express consent and encouragement of Western nations, and the U.S. in particular, politicized Islam to stabilize his own hold on power. During his reign several Islamic actors allowed themselves to be instrumentalized hoping to advance their own ideological objectives. This state intervention grossly "distorted" the Islamic field and created new players, institutions and concepts which later on acquired an identity and life of their own. Most of the time, in the past as well as right into the present, transnational militant Islamist activity in Afghanistan and Kashmir has been under the control, on the leash or at least partly related to elements of Pakistan's military and security-related bureaucracy. In turn, the current "threat" or political virulence of transnational Islam as seen from the West can hardly be separated from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

Major champions of these issues are transnational jihadi groups such as the Lashkar-i Taiba (LT, Pious Army, 1988, Ahl-i Hadith), Jaish-e Muhammadi (JM, Muhammad's Army, 2000, Deobandi), or the Hizbul-Mujahidin (HM, Party of Holy Warriors, 1989, Jama'at-i Islami), mainly operating in Indian Kashmir.

Separate mention has to be made of the issue of sectarianism. As discussed above, competitive Islamic mobilization has led religious groups to fight for the correct and true Islam. Given the cultural fragmentation of South Asian Muslims, these doctrinal differences turned into sectarian conflicts. Prominent Pakistani sectarian groups include the Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP, Pakistan's Army of the Companions of the Prophet, 1985, Deobandi), the split-away faction of the

Lashkar-i Jhangwi (LJ, Jhangwi's Army, 1994, Deobandi), the Sunni Tahrik (ST, Sunni Movement, 1990, Barelwi), and the Sipah-i-Mohammadi (SM, Muhammad's Army, 1993, Shia).

While the concepts underlying doctrinal differences are being promoted by the madrassa networks, it is through the formation of radical militias which have enjoyed the backing of the military and security apparatus that these differences turned into operational ideologies and politics. They were played out in violence between Sunni and Shia groups; battles for mosque control between Deobandis and Barelwis; clashes pitting Muhajir groups against local competitors in urban Sindh; attacks targeting Ahmadis, but also Ahl-i Hadith activists. Radical groups seeking to defend the "Finality of Prophethood" in Islam (*Khatm-e Nabuwwat*) against Ahmadi doctrinal claims are associated with acts of violence; they have also established a global presence. Being a major driving force behind the formation of jihadi groups and the expansion of their activism to Pakistan's neighboring states and territories, sectarian beliefs have fuelled jihadi militancy more than is commonly acknowledged. As such, sectarianism is a major factor in the continuing high levels of militancy on the Pakistan-Afghan border, as well as in Kashmir.

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There are numerous examples where sectarian groups got logistical support from the jihadi outfits of their networks. For instance, the SSP trained in camps of the Harkat-ul-Mujahidin in Afghanistan (while still under Taliban rule) and Pakistani Kashmir. The Shia militia Pasban trained in camps of the Shia jihadi group for Kashmir, Hizbul Momineen.[109] Their leadership structures and funding networks also overlap. Many jihadi groups are ideologically driven by the same quest for the "true" interpretation of Islam, a concept they share with the sectarian outfits of their milieu. According to Amir Rana, many of the sectarian groups rely on support from the business community which is also divided by ethnic and religious cleavages. They interact with the sectarian and radical milieu in order to promote their own business activities, to harm competitors, or to conduct personal vendettas. These business networks which evolved out of the South Asia Muslim trading castes sometimes also patronize the transnational activities of radical groups.

The backing of the military and intelligence services, combined with concomitant cash flows, created a market of religious violence in which groups split and degenerated into rogue militias which pursued religious objectives in name only, but were more interested in collecting money and handing out cars and perks to their members. Sociologically, they were more akin to urban banditry. While the ideologically motivated groups had sometimes listened to religious scholars serving as their patrons, the rogue militias had stopped doing so. This made it even more difficult for Pakistan to control them. Splinter factions of the Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami and the Lashkar-e-

[109] Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi organizations in Pakistan* (Lahore: Mashal Books, 2004).

Jhangvi were at times considered rogue groups spinning out of any command. Some of the lesser known groups which had claimed responsibility for acts of violence could be counted here. The Al-Faran may have been such a group, claiming responsibility for the abduction of six western tourists in Indian Kashmir and killing one of them in 1995.[110] Some factions of the MQM, the Urdu-speaking migrant movement in Sindh, which in 1992 split with active help of the military hoping to control them, could also be considered rogue elements.

Most of the transnational mujahidin groups developed a regional focus as they had been formed to intervene in the conflicts of Kashmir, Afghanistan and sometimes also targeted post-Soviet and Chinese Central Asia. In a competition of its own, groups solely focusing on Kashmir have been linked to all of the major religious parties of Sunni and Shia Islam in Pakistan (Deobandi, Barelwi, Ahl-i Hadith, Jama'at-i Islami, TJP). Analysts believe that most of them have also received support from the military and intelligence establishment in Pakistan, which over a long period played a prominent role in coordination, funding, training and logistical support. While much of their activism was outbound, Pakistan had to face some inbound activities as a consequence of their intervention (such as the influx of ex-Taliban and other foreign fighters, but also of Indian Muslims recruited for the Kashmir conflict).

From among the jihadi groups operating in Pakistan, it is probably correct to assume that it is mainly "inbound" transnational actors that pursue a distinct global orientation. Al Qaeda constitutes the most prominent example as it linked up with radicalized sectarian Sunni groups of various denominations (Deobandi, Ahl-i Hadith, Barelwi). Uzbek, Chechen and Uighur fighters would constitute another group of foreign fighters stranded with their families in the northwestern tribal regions of Pakistan as a residue of the Afghan conflict. Fleeing from their local conflicts in Uzbekistan, Chechnya and the Xinjiang province of China, they had joined the Afghan war as "comrades-in-arms" of the Taliban.

The more peaceful and ideological global Islamic networks such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajirun, would also fall in this category. Local Pakistani enthusiasts with an intellectual background ventured to establish national units, which failed to take off on a larger scale. It is their Arabo-centric culture which makes it difficult for these networks to strike deep roots in the Islamist milieu of Pakistan that is largely driven by Urdu- and local language tradition.[111]

Regarding outside actors of transnational Islam in Pakistan, the international media and policymakers often point to foreign students attending the traditional madrassas, but also the modernist International Islamic University. After 9/11, their number has significantly gone down, partly for lack of funding due to international political pressure, partly because of specific bans and restrictions introduced by the government of Pakistan, also under international pressure. In terms of motivation, those international students would consist of two groups: one which traditionally has sought guidance from religious scholars of other countries, and another, following the trajectories of political and ideological issues that have been fought in the name of Islam since the 1980s in the region.

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[110] Cf. Joseph Burns, "Worry Rising for Hostages Seized in India," New York Times, December 13, 1995, at http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=980DE6D71639F930A25751C1A963958260&scp=1&sq=al%20faran&st=cse, accessed on June 17, 2008; Sanjoy Hanzarika, "Most Leaders Of Separatists In Kashmir Assail Killing," Ibid., August 15, 1995, at http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=990CE4D7103AF936A2575BC0A963958260&scp=2&sq=al%20faran&st=cse, accessed on June 17, 2008.

[111] Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan.*

Political Madrassas and Charities

Newly formed radical madrassas and charities run by militant outfits have emerged as a separate group owing their existence to Pakistan's political and ideological polarization. Some of these groups established regular religious schools across Pakistan providing religious instruction—loosely based on the famous theological curriculum of the Dars-e Nizami followed by most Sunni mainstream madrassas. In addition, they would teach the ideology of their own militant group, including their special reading of the jihad concept. These include the schools of the Jama'at al-Da'wat (JD, Missionary Party) following the Ahl-i Hadith doctrine. The JD emerged in 2002 out of the former missionary center Markaz-ul-Da'wa-tul-Irshad (1986) and allowed the Lashkar-e Taiba fighters to regroup within its ranks when they were banned. According to various estimates, the JD runs 50 to 100 schools all over Pakistan with up to 10,000 students, many of which are known as Jamia-ud-Da'wa-tul-Islamiyya.[112]

But also the Jaish-e Mohammadi, now under the name of Al Furkan, and the Sipah-e Sahaba are believed to run their own madrassas. According to Muhammad Rana, six militant outfits are now working as charities. Jaish-e Muhammad is now working by the name of Al-Rehmat Trust, Harkatul Jihad-e-Islami as Al-Ershad Trust and Harkatul Mujahideen as Al-A(n)sar Trust on Pakistan territory, although they continue their operations under their old names in Pakistani and Indian Kashmir.[113]

One also has to consider those perhaps 50 to 100 madrassas, mainly of Deobandi persuasion, that had been selected in the early 1980s by Pakistan, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to facilitate the conduit of military training and arms for the Afghan war.[114] Some of them were built anew, others were long established. The latter ones, with a clear radical reputation, include the so-called Binuri Town Madrassa in Karachi from where many Taliban leaders graduated, and the Madrassa Haqaniyya in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in Akora Khattak, run by the Deobandi splinter party, the JUI (S), led by Samiul Haq.[115]

The Lal Masjid or Red Mosque in Islamabad, which gained notoriety through the stand-off with the Pakistani security forces in early 2007, is a prominent example of the mosques and madrassas newly created by the military and security establishment for the jihad against the Soviet Union. The two religious schools attached to it were attended by up to 10,000 students. Lal Masjid's founder, Maulana Muhammad Abdullah, was an outspoken cleric supporting the U.S.-sponsored war against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. His two sons, Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid Ghazi, spearheaded the recent confrontation.[116] The clerics and students of these mosques and madrassas across Pakistan still breathe resentment over the "betrayal," or the reversal of the military leadership under General Musharraf to back the U.S. and other Western nations in the war against terror.

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112 Ibid., 325f.

113 Muhammad Rana, "Changing Tactics of Jihad Organizations in Pakistan," *Research and Development Reports*, Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (March 2006), at http://san-pips.com/PIPS-R&D-%20Files/Reports/R&D-Report-Article7/R&D-Report-A7-D.asp, accessed on June 17, 2008.

114 "For training this Army of Islam, Musharraf and Aziz, assisted by Maj. Gen. (retd) Mahmud Durrani, selected 100 of the then existing madrassas, almost all Deobandi, and introduced military training by serving and retired officers of the Pakistan Army attached to them." B. Raman, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)—A Backgrounder. Paper No. 332, South Asia Analysis Group, October 3, 2001, at http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers4/paper332.html accessed on June 17, 2008.

115 Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan.*

116 "Lal Masjid—Pakistan's Red Mosque," About.com: *Islam*, at http://islam.about.com/od/muslimcountries/p/lalmasjid.htm, accessed on June 17, 2008.

Faith-Based Religious and Pietist Networks

The rationale for most transnational religious activism emerging from Pakistan remains faith-based and piety-driven. Such activism aims at the transfer of religious knowledge, the perfecting and strengthening of religious observance, increasing the number of followers in a tough competition with other Islamic groups and recruiting new adherents from among non-Muslims. These objectives can be clearly observed in the network of Deobandi madrassas. The vast network of Deobandi madrassas in the subcontinent and beyond continues to expand on its own rational grounds related to its expansion as a socio-cultural and educational movement, which cannot be sufficiently explained by security, military, or even political arguments.

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Reasons for Deobandi activism are more related to competitive mobilization that started during the late colonial era. The religious Islamic networks established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have gone transnational and global through the lens of their own missionary ideology bent on expanding the influence of their groups.[117] The pattern they follow is time-worn: students go to new places where they establish a school of their own. This can be a pious endeavor or the attempt to become self-employed. In the process, students go abroad to service the foreign communities of Deobandi descent by offering them an educational outlet. Another driving force seems to be the doctrinal and ideological competition with rival groups in foreign Muslim communities (of South Asian descent) where they particularly seek to confront the Barelwis, Ahl-i Hadith, and to counter the perceived influence of the Ahmadis.

Pakistan's madrassas are estimated to include up to 20,000 schools which can be of a varying degree of sophistication. If we take those considered somewhat equivalent to a secondary education, they would teach a formal eight-year degree course awarding the title of a religious scholar (*'alim*). Their number would probably be less than 10,000 in the whole of Pakistan. Enrolment figures have become a matter of political debate. Accordingly, their estimates vary grossly. A recent study comparing various statistical data asserted that the size of the madrassa sector is much overrated. The authors consider schools teaching a religious curriculum and demanding full daytime attendance, and not secondary attendance after or before public school classes:

> According to our analysis, the madrassa sector is small compared to educational options such as public and private schooling, accounting for less than 1 percent of overall enrolment in the country. Even in the districts that border Afghanistan, where madrassa enrolment is the highest in the country, it is less than 7.5 percent of all enrolled children. Furthermore, we find no evidence of a dramatic increase in madrassa enrolment in recent years.[118]

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[117] See Dietrich Reetz, "The Deoband Universe"; "Dar al-'Ulum Deoband and its Self-Representation on the Media," *Islamic Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 209; and, "Change and Stagnation in Islamic Education: The Dar al-Ulum of Deoband after the Split in 1982," in *The Madrassa in Asia: Political Activism and Trans-National Linkages*, eds. Farish A. Noor, Yoginder Sikand and Martin van Bruinessen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming).

[118] T. Andrabi, J. Das, A. I. Khwaja, and T. Zajonc, "Religious School Enrolment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data," *Comparative Education Review* 50, no. 3 (2006): 446-477.

What is important for this paper is that the authors of that study, which was based on detailed household sample interviews, found no particular evidence to suggest that madrassa attendance in a household depends on religious or social variables. Differences with regard to the literacy level of the head of the household or its income situation between "madrassa" and "non-madrassa households," where a child is enrolled or not, were marginal. They were below 10%. "The largest difference between household types is their proximity to a private school."[119] The findings confirm that madrassa attendance is a matter of practical consideration with regard to education opportunities. The study also confirms the anthropological observation that madrassa attendance is driven by the wish and long-standing tradition in South Asian Muslim households to devote one child to a religious career which is expected to bring rewards for the whole family in the hereafter.

The madrassa networks from Pakistan (and South Asia) have now firmly established themselves on a global scale. Deobandi networks and institutions vie for influence not only with Barelwi networks from South Asia, but, for example, with Salafi institutions and networks, forming another distinct, even though highly amorphous and heterogeneous "rival" network. Modern Islamic schools combining religious and secular teaching form another type of transnational alliances, exchanging teachers, students and concepts; so do the International Islamic Universities. Sufi networks modernize themselves establishing "franchises" in various countries and regions.

Arguably the most successful transnational pietist network from South Asia, the Tablighi Jama'at, is now considered the largest living transnational movement of Islam on the globe. The TJ is believed to have attracted 12-15 million followers worldwide, thus transcending the socio-cultural boundaries of South Asian migrants. In France and Spain, the TJ largely relies on Muslim migrants from North Africa; in Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia, local Muslims constitute the majority of followers where South Asia descent only plays a minimal role. While the movement expanded exponentially and joined the Muslim mainstream, its leaders kept away from politics. Yet the majority of lay followers brought into the movement new social, economic and political concerns. Its emphasis on ritual and observance has changed the political micro-climate in many regions in favor of Islamist political actors. Some militant groups have also tried to exploit the prestige and influence of the TJ as well as ideological affinity through a wider interpretation of the jihad concept as a struggle for the correct religious behavior.

While the TJ no doubt has a global concept of expansion, it would be far-fetched to assume that it organizes militant or political Islamism. In fact, it has long been attacked by political Islamists such as the Jama'at-i Islami for neglecting political struggle. Recently, it has tried to limit the transfer of Western recruits to local madrassas in South Asia. Such a transfer was heavily criticized by Western analysts as it allegedly created a conduit to militant groups, a highly speculative and largely unproven assumption as most convicted international terrorists had a modern educational background.

Religious networks from the Sufi-related Barelwi milieu have tried to catch up with Deobandi transnationalism, although as a rule they rarely manage to go beyond the South Asian Muslim diaspora. The modernist Sufi network of the Deedat Islamic centers is a notable exception as it managed to operate successfully in South Africa, Arabic and Western countries.[120] Their emphasis is on comparative religious propagation highlighting the superiority of the Quran as compared to

[119] Ibid., 461.

[120] David Westerlund, "Ahmed Deedat's Theology of Religion: Apologetics through Polemics," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 3 (2003), 263ff; and, Reetz, "The Deoband Universe."

the Bible. Their pamphlets teach "correct" Islamic practice (prayer, dress, fasting, and education) in a modern setting. But the family network behind the organization based in South Africa (Durban) is related to the Barelwi section of the South Asian diaspora.

This diaspora background often emerged from links with specific South Asian trading casts that extended across the former British colonial empire and beyond. The religious networks of the Deobandis and Barelwis are the most prominent cases in point. Many of those networks rely on Gujarati or Memon trading caste connections. As mentioned, the Barelwis are less likely than the Deobandis to cross the social boundaries of South Asian/Pakistani migrant communities. This may be related to the much stronger hereditary element in traditional Barelwi culture. The madrassas at Deoband and the shrine of the Barelwi founder Ahmad Raza in Bareilly (India) act as normative centers for their global activities, with little strategy and policy in terms of expansion or control. Even though their global expansion is partly driven by competition, it is rarely planned and executed in a centralized manner. These groups developed several subsidiary networks. For the Deobandis, these would comprise Deobandi madrassas, sometimes affiliated with Deobandi shaykhs and their disciples, but also political groups (Jamiat-e Ulama in South Africa, Canada).

The Ahmadi network is driven by both religious and migration concerns. A transnational orientation has become constitutive for the Ahmadiyya, as the group has been persecuted in Pakistan where it had relocated its religious center after independence. The Ahmadis are currently running their British center as a global headquarters. They have also been able to transcend their South Asian background, notably in Africa and Southeast Asia, although their connection to Pakistan's culture remains strong and important.

We should also consider here the religious groups drawing doctrinal inspiration from centers of normative Islam in the larger West Asian region, but outside Pakistan's borders. This orientation would apply to Shia groups and their solidarity with Iran's religious and political leadership. Their bonds, however, would be highly heterogeneous. In their outbound activity, these actors would be driven by local concerns and the search for religious guidance from Iranian theologians. Inbound activity could be driven by both the religious and political establishment in Iran which does not necessarily follow the same trajectories. In- and outbound activities will also be found with South Asian Shia migrant networks that not necessarily dissolve in global Shia migration.

Shia groups in their transnational attachment thus roughly divide into two camps—one loyalist to the state of Pakistan with a moderate agenda, and the other ideological with strong devotion to Iran and its religious leaders.

The Ahl-i Hadith subscribes in its own ways to the ideas of global Islamic activism for both political and religio-ideological goals. The Ahl-i Hadith transnational ideology is largely focused on Saudi Arabia with which it identifies because of its doctrinal and ideological affinity with Hanbalism and Wahhabism. If taken literally, though, this identification would reveal a paradoxical constellation as the Ahl-i Hadith rejects the Sunni law schools whereas Wahhabism derives from observance of the Hanbalite legal tradition. They are united in their "equal" reverence for the founders of these law schools and their rejection of impermissible or "un-Islamic" innovations (*bida*').

Their ideology has been labeled—both by them and others—as Salafi, or following the pious founder generation of Islam (*as-Salaf*). Yet the term Salafi is loose enough to unite highly heterogeneous elements under its umbrella, with a pietist, political and militant faction. The target of Ahl-i Hadith/Salafi activism is religious and largely inner-Islamic, fighting for the "true" and

correct Islam. The Ahl-i Hadith network is at best regional, but as part of the larger Salafi network global. Its transnational activism with regard to Pakistan is both in- and outbound.

There is also a small but growing number of actors and institutions tracing themselves back to Turkish origins, such as the liberal Muslim Fethullah Gülen (b. 1938) schools now transforming into a global network of their own.[121]

Religious Nationalism and Migration

The reasons why transnational networks and institutions of, for instance, the Jama'at-i Islami, the Barelwi missionary movement Da'wat-i Islami, or the (Mirpuri) Kashmir groups show a preponderant influence of Pakistanis beyond the country's borders lie in the flexible adaptation of its migrant and social networks. Those religious actors and institutions carry a distinctly Pakistani flavor and refer back to their roots in the country. They are rather treated as overseas branches of the Pakistani organization.

The network of Jama'at-i Islami-affiliated groups and institutions now extends across the world, but has retained a clear Pakistani flavor despite the fact that the "mother" organization still exists in India.[122] Its "independent" status is partly derived from the fact that, after partition, the JI founder Maududi continued to direct its affairs in Pakistan. It was in Pakistan that the JI could develop its major ambition of political Islamism evolving into a regular political party. This is in marked contrast with the TJ where the Indian center still remains the global headquarters, with the Pakistani headquarters in Raiwind being second among equals.

Contrary to other Islamic groups, the JI founder Maududi had always emphasized the need of conquering the state and polity to mould society in the ways of fully observing and implementing the religious injunctions of Islam. The JI developed a complete set of organizations (see Appendix I) for party politics, the affairs of students, women, academic research, ideological training and international liaising coordinated at its headquarters, al-Mansura, in Lahore. The JI self-consciously presents itself as an ideological party that pursues political Islamism on the lines of the Muslim Brotherhood. Its political orientation is very much Pakistan-centric with a nationalist direction bordering on the chauvinistic, as can be seen by its strong stand on the Kashmir conflict and its ambition to become a governing party.

Despite being the smaller of the Islamic parties, the JI leader Qazi Husain strives to be seen as a political spokesman of all Islamic forces. Considering themselves a professional and modern force they seek to mediate between the conservative traditional Islamic sector tied to activities of religious scholars and the modern sector of government and private sector institutions. JI cadres and their families expanded into a closely knit community and social network developing sect-like features. In Lahore, the JI runs its own housing society (like other Islamic groups).

The JI international network has grown out of this social cohesion and its nexus with diaspora communities. However, its international activity went beyond these social and cultural limitations following its ideological ambitions of political Islamism. The JI looks at international political issues from the position of international solidarity in much the same way as did the historical groupings of the Communist and the Socialist International. Yet despite its ideological affinity it

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[121] Sabrina Tavernise, "Turkish Schools Offer Pakistan a Gentler Vision of Islam," New York Times, May 4, 2008, at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/04/world/asia/04islam.html?_r=2&ref=asia&oref=slogin&oref=slogin, accessed June 17, 2008. Cf. M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

[122] See the Pakistani website, http://jamaat.org/indexe.html, which however contains little indication of the JI's transnational activism.

continues to keep a separate profile and identity feeding on the distinct ethnic and cultural roots of its foreign members, which are not all but predominantly of South Asian descent.

The JI transnational activism is both out- and in-bound. This activism demonstrates the increasing impact of the JI on the international Islamist scene and their reverse influence on the JI. Such impact is embodied in international students attending courses at its headquarters in Lahore. This activism also shows in the JI's strong connections with the International Islamic Universities and the JI's interest in international Islamic educational networking in general. It is further demonstrated in cooperation with like-minded political parties of Islam, such as the Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) in Malaysia. The JI runs foreign branches and student groups under different names developing into a globalizing JI network of transnational political Islam. Britain is the most prominent example here. The JI's UK branches play a key role through the UK Islamic Mission in London and the Islamic Foundation in Leicester.[123] These branches have become centers in their own right not only for the JI's influence in Europe, but they have also turned into a switchboard for reinforcing their impact in South Asia.

Despite its relatively close association with the JI ideology, the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) is a transnational actor of Islam on its own. It teaches a whole range of secular courses (business and management administration, law, social science, engineering, applied sciences) combined with Islamic studies courses and extensive religious instruction.[124] Its pan-Islamic agenda is promoted by the affiliated academies of Islamic Law (shari'a) and Mission (da'wa). On one level, it is part of a multinational network of religious modernism, linking up to International Universities in Malaysia, Sudan or South Africa. Here it pursues a transnational concept of Islamic education and propagation that expands on its own religio-ideological rationale. On another level, the Islamabad University is a very Pakistan-centered organization fully autonomous in its international activities which are both outbound (seminars, workshops, conferences) and inbound (international students). It is nowadays almost totally financed by Pakistan's government acting more as a national educational institution than as an international agency. In the field of transnational Islam, the IIUI's agenda is driven both by the state and by Jama'at-i Islami thinking—a legacy of the Zia-ul-Haq era.

Barelwi organizations constitute another group of transnational actors that strongly reflect the influence of the nationalist culture and politics of Pakistan. While they pursue a larger religious agenda as discussed above, their attachment to Pakistan is very close. Almost all of their transnational activities are carried out by Pakistani diaspora representatives and their descendents. They also firmly look at leaders and headquarters in Pakistan with their concepts based in Pakistan's social and cultural traditions.

Among the Barelwi organizations is the religious and educational movement Minhaj-ul-Quran,[125] led by Tahir-ul-Qadri (b. 1951), and the Barelwi missionary movement of the Da'wat-i Islami[126] that pursue a transnational ministry in distinctly Pakistani colors. Both were founded in 1980. Abroad, they provide cultural and spiritual services to the Pakistani diaspora community

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123 See the UK Islamic Mission in London's website at http://www.ukim.org; and the Islamic Foundation in Leicester's website at http://www.islamic-foundation.org.uk.

124 Cf. the university's website at http://www.iiu.edu.pk.

125 The group's website, http://www.minhaj.org/, calls itself proudly "Minhaj-ul-Quran International."

126 See http://www.dawateislami.net. Cf. Thomas Gugler, "Parrots of Paradise, Symbols of the Super-Muslim: Sunnah, Sunnaization and Self-Fashioning in the Islamic Missionary Movements Tablighi-i Jama'at, Da'wat-e Islami and Sunni Da'wat-e Islami" (conference paper presented at the 20th European Conference of Modern South Asian Studies, Manchester University, July 9, 2008. See http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/savifadok/volltexte/2008/142/.

which is also targeted for funds and adherents. The Minhaj-ul-Quran runs a network of private schools in Pakistan with its center in Lahore, teaching secular degrees combined with religious instruction of the Barelwi variety. The Da'wat-i Islami developed in competition with the Deobandi-oriented Tablighi Jama'at. It established itself as a global actor with its headquarters (Faizan-e Madina) in Karachi at the Old Vegetable Market (Purana Sabzi Mandi).

Apart from Barelwi groups, Sufi scholars and networks emphasizing the spiritual message of *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) operate out of Pakistan with growing intensity—although they do so also from India and other places of origin. The personal ministry of Maulana Hakim Muhammad Akhtar (b. 1928), who is based at his Sufi hospice in Karachi, the Khanqah Imdadiyya Ashrafiyya, presents an interesting case in point.[127] He is a disciple of the pietist Deobandi scholar and Sufi Shaykh Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (1863-1943). His global followers reside in India, the UAE, South Africa, or the UK. [128] As the current author learnt from an interview in 2005, Akhtar managed to gain the allegiance of the rector of the Deobandi school in South Africa, Darul Ulum Lenasia, thus weaning him away from the Tablighi Jama'at. During that time Akhtar was mentioned as a new, up-and-coming popular source of religious and spiritual guidance among migrant Deobandi activists.[129]

Maulana Abdul Hafiz Makki, a Deobandi shaykh, also runs a truly transnational ministry closely associated with Pakistan. As teacher of the Hadith, he is based at the Madrassa Saulatiyya in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He has a strong base of disciples in Pakistan which he regularly tours to receive donations and to give lectures. The local press also reported him to be a patron of sorts for militant outfits in Pakistan. And he is in regular attendance at public preaching events in the diaspora, especially in Britain and South Africa.[130]

Transnational actors such as Kashmiri diaspora groups originating from Mirpur District in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir or the Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz operate out of Pakistan with a mixed agenda. Their political objectives are very much tied to Pakistani nationalism and outwardly secular. The Mirpuri activists support a nationalistic agenda on Kashmir with some wanting it to be part of Pakistan and others independent. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF, 1966) with its various factions has been a major platform for this program. The MQM aims at achieving a secured position in the politics and economy of Pakistan for the community of Urdu-speaking migrants (Muhajirs) hailing from India. But their social fabric as transnational networks is marked by clear affinity with local culture and, by extension, spiritual Islam of the Barelwi variety, which has a strong influence in their foreign communities. Both use their transnational networks to mobilize funds and support.

State Response

The response of the state to the efforts of Islamic actors from other countries to wield influence in Pakistan has been shaped by political exigencies and military compulsions as Pakistan formally joined the coalition of countries fighting a war on terror. Pakistan closed the doors to foreign

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127 Cf. the entry in the Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakim_Akhtar, written probably by a follower and admirer.

128 For the scholar's website with entries of his global followers, see, http://www.khanqah.org/; for his blog, see, http://annoor.wordpress.com/introduction-an-noor/.

129 The author's interview during field research in 2005.

130 Reetz, "The Deoband Universe."

students who attended madrassas in 2005.[131] Clerics argued, however, that such an approach was discriminatory and vowed to continue taking in foreign students. In practice, foreign students now have to master a long vetting process of the receiving country, i.e. Pakistan, and the sending country. Those limitations apply less to modern Islamic schools offering secular education in addition to a religious curriculum, such as the International Islamic University. Here limitations are conditioned by financial constraints of the students and of Pakistan's government. Nowadays scholarships for foreign students are rarely available. This resource crunch was mainly caused by the reduction in financial support from Middle Eastern donors who have lately been prevented from continuing their donations.

Pakistan's military and security agencies also fight foreign radical Islamists with military means, with varying degree of success. They pursue mainly three targets: foreign fighters operating clandestinely in Pakistan's large urban conglomerations; groups of foreign Islamist fighters stranded after the Afghan war, such as the Uzbeks, Chechens and the Chinese Muslims from Xinjiang; and those attached to the command structures of al Qaeda, allegedly hiding in the mountainous tribal areas of the Pak-Afghan borderland. It is, however, assumed that the state's reluctance to pursue the sectarian and jihadi groups operating in Kashmir leaves many loopholes for Islamic militants to regroup. In addition, the defeated Afghan Taliban established command structures in Pakistan, with their leaders more or less openly residing in Quetta, Baluchistan. Parts of Pakistan's military and security establishment still pursue a Central Asian hinterland option where they are ready to tolerate or utilize local militants to counter perceived Indian influence in Afghanistan and to prepare for a post-intervention scenario after the U.S would withdraw from there.[132]

Pakistan has been reluctant to deal with these militants who, among other factors, contributed to the formation and emergence of a "local" Pakistani Taliban force under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud.[133] Those groups, however, remain highly heterogeneous and are strongly marked by local tribal custom. It has often been argued that hard-hitting military measures on behalf of the Pakistani state and the U.S. allied forces accompanied by many civilian casualties have the tendency to prolong the conflict and strengthen the opponents as those tribal militias articulate not only Islamist political objectives, but also tribal concerns about marginalization and underdevelopment. The new Pakistan coalition government has vowed to find a political solution, an approach which has come in for heavy criticism by the Americans in turn.

Evaluating Islamic Transnationalism in Pakistan

Given the complexity of the issue with regard to Pakistan, it seems difficult and perhaps not even useful to identify singular conduits or means of influence for transnational Islamic actors in the country.

While recognizing the mutual and overlapping influences of factors, this paper would, in conclusion, argue for a decided differentiation between political, religious and socio-ethnic actors, institutions and motives in transnational Islam with regard to Pakistan. The proposed

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131 "Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf says all foreign students at madrassas, or religious schools, some 1,400 pupils, must leave the country," BBC, July 29, 2005, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4728643.stm, accessed August 19, 2008.

132 Dietrich Reetz, "Pakistan and the Central Asia Hinterland Option: the Race for Regional Security and Development," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 1 (1993/94): 28-56.

133 Cf. a profile of Baitullah Mehsud by Syed Shoaib Hasan for the BBC News website, December 28, 2007, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7163626.stm, accessed on June 17, 2008.

classification allows identifying the root causes of militancy in the transnational Islam of Pakistan. As a result, it is suggested to de-dramatize the actors and institutions under categories two and three relating to religious activism and Pakistan nationalism. Those actors and institutions have to be evaluated in the context of globalization, understood as a complex and historical process, going beyond economic and financial aspects. Instead, the paper would invite to firmly deal with the first category of political and ideological motivations—not on religious or Islamic, but on political grounds.

Against this background, it is rather the reluctance or inability of the Pakistani government to introduce firm standards of law and civility which has allowed transnational Islamic actors to create a political and security threat to its own citizens and to other countries, both in the region and beyond. It is strongly advised against conceiving concepts to manage or change aspects of the religious beliefs and practice of transnational Islamic actors as such interventions will inevitably backfire. While some political analysts believe that the madrassa system is one major source of instability, it is cautioned here that religious education will always have to remain religious in nature. Educational standards can only be improved by lifting public education in a major way. All social and political actors—religious or not—have to agree on the norms of civil cohabitation—and have to be bound by them.

The classification of transnational Islam proposed in this paper further helps in understanding that much of the transnational Islam emanating from Pakistan is driven by the desire to fulfill spiritual, social and cultural needs of Pakistan's extensive migrant communities around the world. Since many of them live in conditions of utter marginalization, these networks are meeting the needs of people who are at the receiving end of globalization. To improve their lot, better social and political concepts are required to integrate them instead of marginalizing and castigating their transnational religious support networks.

The diversity and heterogeneity of Pakistan's transnational Islamic actors and institutions also suggests questioning the analytical value of the category of transnational Islam. One has to ask if such a category is not more reflective of political impulses aiming to control Muslims and their organizations rather than the desire for a nuanced analysis. In any case, it is the political, social and cultural issues behind transnational Islam which need attention and solving.

Judged in terms of political virulence, it is the unstable, charged and polarized nature of the overall political framework in Pakistan that pushes many transnational actors of Islam into the political, extremist and even militant realm. Currently, the major threat to the stability of Pakistan comes from sectarian and jihadi groups that spin out of control from state and religious patronage. Pakistan cannot successfully fight the newly emergent Pakistani Taliban in the country's northwest regions as long as some elements in the administration hope to keep intact parts of the militant network for operation against India and the Karzai government. But Pakistan can neither achieve success as long as it does not address the tribal dimension of this warfare successfully since much of current Taliban operations reflect long-standing disaffected and marginalized tribal concerns.

To prevent transnational actors of Islam in Pakistan from harming each other and civil society, the Pakistani state needs to resurrect its civil authority and regulate these institutions without discriminating against them. It will further have to focus on social rehabilitation and the development of disaffected communities giving rise to militant Islam which is on the verge of turning into local insurgencies, with education, employment and social amenities holding prime

importance. On many of these issues the civil and security-related bureaucracy of Pakistan is currently on the retreat, a course which urgently needs to be reversed.

APPENDIX I: Overview of Main Religio-Cultural Milieus of Islam in Pakistan

Activity	Institutions	Transnationalism
	Deobandi	
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Darul Uloom Deoband (north India, 1867) – Deobandi madrassas	Foreign students, graduates, teachers, branches; *fatwas* as international reference
Political party	Jami'yat-i 'Ulama'-i Islam (JUI, 1944) Faction led by Samiul Haq (JUI-S)	Foreign branches
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Tablighi Jama'at (TJ, 1927)	Preaching groups traveling abroad
Student groups/ activities	Jami'yat-e Tulaba-e Islam (JTI) *Tarbiyati* camps (summer schools)	Foreign branches Format/concept exported, traveling speakers
Sectarian groups	Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP, 1985, banned 2002) → Millat-e Islamia-e Pakistan Lashkar-i Jhangwi (LJ, banned 2001) Khatm-e Nabuwwat Organizations	Intervention in Afghanistan, Kashmir Confronting Ahmadis in South Asia and worldwide
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Harkatul-Mujahidin (HUM) Jaish-e Muhammadi (JM) → Khudamul Islam	Interventions abroad, foreign militant members
	Barelwi	
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Shrine of Ahmad Raza Khan, Bareilly (north India) – Barelwi madrassas, shrines	Foreign students, graduates, teachers, branches; *fatwas* as international reference
Political party	Jamiyat-i Ulama-i Pakistan (1948)	Foreign branches
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Ahl-e Sunnat (AS, 1900) Minhaj-ul-Quran (MQ, 1980) Zia-ul-Quran Da'wat-i Islami (1980) Deedat Islamic Centers	Foreign branches, Traveling preaching groups
Student groups/ activities	Anjuman-e Talaba-e Islam (1969) Mustafavi Students Movement (MSM, MQ student wing)	Foreign branches
Sectarian groups	Sunni Tahrik (ST, 1990, under investigation 2002)	
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Local militias: Tanzim Ahl-e Sunnat, al-Baraq, Tehriq-e-Jihad, Sunni Mujahidin Force	Kashmir, Afghanistan, Frontier

Activity	Institutions	Transnationalism
	Jama'at-i Islami	
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Mansura headquarters and schools, Lahore (1975) Islamic Research Academy (1963) Syed Mawdoodi International Educational Institute (1982) Markaz Ulum-al-Islamia (1980) Islamic Education Society (1982)	International students, courses for international Islamic activists
Political party	Jama'at-i Islami (1941)	Foreign branches
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Jamiat Ittehadul Ulama (Organization of Religious Scholars) Institute of Policy Studies (1979) UK Islamic Mission (1962) Islamic Foundation in Leicester, UK (1972)	Intervention in conflicts in Afghanistan, Kashmir through participation in Afghan Defense Council
Student groups/ activities	Islami Jamiat-e Tulaba (IJT, 1947) Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba Arabia Islami Jamiat-e-Talibat (female wing) Pasban	Foreign branches
Sectarian groups	Ministry of Dr. Israr Ahmed (B. 1932): Anjuman Khudamul Quran (1986); Tanzeem-e Islami (1956)	Foreign missionary activities
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Hizbul Mujahideen (1989)	Intervention in Kashmir conflict
	Ahl-i Hadith	
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Ahl-i Hadith sect (1890) Ahl-i Hadith conference (1906) in (Indian) Punjab, Bihar, Bhopal	Branches in India, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Britain
Political party	Markazi Ahl-i Hadith (1906/1956)	Foreign branches (esp. Saudi Arabia)
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Markaz-ud-Da'wa-tul-Irshad (1986) → Jama'at-ud-Da'wa (2002) Jeddah Dawah Center	Intervention in Afghanistan, Kashmir conflicts Preaching
Student groups / activities	Ahl-i Hadith Student Federation (ASF) Tulaba Jama'at-ud-Da'wa	Foreign branches
Sectarian groups	Jamiat Ulama Ahl-i Hadith	Foreign branches
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Lashkar-i Taiba (1991, banned 2002)	Intervention in Afghanistan, Kashmir conflicts

Activity	Examples	Transnationalism
	Shia	
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Jamia al Muntazir, Lahore (also TJP headquarters and many offices of Shia community)	
Political party	Tahrik-e Nafaz-e Fiqu-e Jafariyya (TNFJ, 1979) → Tahrik-e Jafariyya-e Pakistan (TJP) → Millat-e Jafariyya (1993, TJP banned 2002, yet MMA member; 2 branches led by Naqvi and Musavi)	Connections with Iran, both Shia clergy and government, diaspora Shia communities
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Shia Ulama Council (Wafaq-e Shia Ulema-e Pakistan)	Connections with Iranian clergy
Student groups/ activities	Imamia Student Organization (ISO, 1972) Jamiat-e Tulaba Jafaria (1972)	Connections with Iran, Lebanon (Hizbullah)
Sectarian groups	Sipah-e Mohammad-e Pakistan (SMP, 1993, banned 2001)	
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Hizbul Momineen (1991) Pasban-e Islam (1994)	Kashmir conflict intervention
	Ahmadiyya	
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	Jalsa Salana (Annual Conference, 1891, Qadiyan, Punjab, India) Sadr Anjuman-i Ahmadiyya (1906) Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i Isha'at-i Islam (Lahori faction, 1914) Pakistani headquarters of Ahmadiyya community, Rabwah, Punjab (1948, name changed to Chenab Nagar, 1998), includes: Masjid-e-Aqsa (central Ahmadi mosque)	Khalifa (head of community) resides in London (since 1984)
Political party	None (some politicians in Muslim League)	
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Atfal-ul-Ahmadiyya (boys 6-14 y.) Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya (boys/men 15-40 y.) Ansar-i Allah (1911, men, preaching and community service) Lajna Ama' Allah (women) (Anjuman) Tahrik-i Jadid (1934, foreign mission) Taleemul Islam College, Jamia-Nusrat College, in Chenab Nagar Waqf-e Jadid (1957, community service) Waqf-e Nau (1987, volunteers) Muslim Television Ahmadiyya	International branches
Student groups/ activities	Ahmadiyya Muslim Students Associations	Branches worldwide
Sectarian groups	Ahmadiyya Anjuman	
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya (also security functions)	

Activity	Examples	Transnationalism
	Muhajir	
Religious/spiritual center(s), schools	MQM secretariat at Nine-Zero, Azizabad, Karachi	
Political party	Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM, 1984) → Muttahida Qaumi Mahaz (1997) Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz – Haqiqi (MQM-H, 1992, split-off faction)	MQM International Secretariat in Edgware, UK; international units, branches in UK, US, Canada
Subsidiary groups (missionary, education)	Khidmat-e Khalq Foundation (KKF)	Diaspora activities
Student groups/ activities	All Pakistan Muhajir Students Organization (APMSO, 1978)	Foreign branches
Sectarian groups	Not applicable	
Radical/ militant groups, militias	Militant wings of both MQM and MQM-H	

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Interactions of "Transnational" and "Local" Islam in Bangladesh

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper examines the historical trajectory and current status of key transnational Islamic organizations, conduits and trends in Bangladesh to assess their impact on the socio-political and conflict dynamics of the country. The paper argues that Bangladesh's socio-political dynamics and a weak Bangladeshi state have fostered the proliferation of Islamic organizations and Islamist parties with transnational ties. Transnational Islamist currents have also given rise to militant organizations in Bangladesh over the past decade. The paper argues that Bangladesh will continue to witness tensions between transnational interpretations of Islam and local practices in the future, and argues for a more historically grounded and nuanced strategy to help the country oppose its militant elements while strengthening its pietist, tolerant and secularist currents.

MAIN FINDINGS

Transnational Islamic and Islamist organizations, both pietist and political, have a considerable presence in Bangladesh. In recent years, the transnational Islamist organizations have grown significantly. Bangladesh's domestic political environment over the past two decades allowed the Islamists to consolidate their position; consequently, it opened the space for transnational Islamist groups to operate with state support. If the situation remains unchanged, the space for Islamist activities will widen further. Some of these Islamist groups espouse violence, posing a threat to the country's security. The presence of transnational militant groups in Bangladesh has also increased sectarianism within the country. Some of these organizations are extending their operations to neighboring India. Local traditional Islamic practices in Bangladesh are undergoing changes due to interactions with the outside world mediated by transnational Islamic groups, the Bangladeshi diaspora community and the global media. The increased religiosity among the Bangladeshi population, palpable changes in dress, social behavior, and increased sensitivity towards religious issues are indicative of the ongoing changes. Bangladesh is likely to continue to witness tensions between local traditional Islamic practices and those promoted by transnational groups, which will have social and political implications alike.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- While it is necessary to remain cognizant of the Islamists' presence in Bangladesh's political arena, the policies of Western nations should not undermine the secularist forces representing the majority of the Bangladeshi population.
- Transnational Islamist thought and organizations are impacting upon both the social and political arenas of Bangladesh; therefore, policies should be cognizant of these twin aspects in order to be comprehensive in nature.
- The local traditional Islamic traits which encourage pietist practices and the separation of faith and politics in Bangladesh should be highlighted and strengthened.
- Emphasis should be given to the enhancement of the Bangladeshi state's capacity for cultivating political goodwill to deal with transnational Islamist political networks which pose a threat to the country's security.

This study examines the interplay of transnational Islamic thought and organizations with local practices of Islam in Bangladesh. The impact of these interactions on Bangladesh, and the responses of Bangladeshi society and the state to these transnational-local exchanges are explored to see whether changes have taken place in the common understanding of religion, and how those changes have influenced Bangladesh's socio-political and conflict dynamics. Drawing on these analyses, the study attempts to map the trajectories of religio-political ideas and forces in Bangladesh.

In particular, the study seeks to answer the following specific questions:

- Which transnational Islamic/Islamist[134] groups and movements have a significant presence in Bangladesh?
- What are the primary conduits through which transnational Islamic influences are spread in Bangladesh?
- Does the presence of transnational Islamic/Islamist organizations influence the dynamics of local conflicts?

In light of policymakers' growing concerns over the transnational scope of Islamist politics, answers to the above questions will provide specific information regarding the nature and scope of transnational networks and local Islamic practices in Bangladesh, the third largest Muslim-majority country of the world.[135] As opposed to the current security-centric and generalized understanding that all transnational networks constitute a blanket threat to global security, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of the political and social milieu within which these movements are operating in Bangladesh.

The assessment of the country's socio-political and conflict dynamics will help to identify the key actors and drivers of transnational Islam in its pietistic (i.e., movements underscoring personal devotion, piety, and spirituality), Islamist and militant variants. As this paper demonstrates, comprehension of these diverse actors' and movements' specific roles within Bangladesh's socio-political ecosystem is imperative to identify those entities which pose a real threat to security and, consequently, to devise more specific and directed policies to alleviate these threats.

Following this introduction, the paper is divided into six sections. The first section comprises a background of the country, especially highlighting the interplay of religion and politics since Bangladesh's inception in 1971. This historical narrative demonstrates that, despite declaring secularism as a state principle and limiting the role of religion in politics, the Bangladeshi state in its early days failed to address the latent tension between the idea of secularism and the role of Islam in society. After 1975, Bangladesh's military rulers seized upon this tension and brought Islam into the political arena in order to gain political legitimacy. The paper's second section maps the various dimensions of lived Islam (i.e., Islam as practiced by various strata of society) in the country including the political arena. The author shows that Islam is variously understood and expressed by the people of Bangladesh. The third section briefly traces the historical antecedents of the interactions between local and transnational Islamic thought in Bangladesh to demonstrate that such interactions are not new to the country. This section also discusses the long-term impacts

[134] Throughout this paper organizations which advocate religious revivalism as a mode of personal salvation and do not seek to use Islam as a mobilizational tool for political objectives are described as Islamic organizations; while those organizations that view Islam as a political ideology with specific goals related to political and social changes are referred to as Islamist.

[135] Almost 89% of Bangladesh's population adheres to Islam. Bangladeshi Muslims are predominantly Sunni, but a small number follow the Shia tradition. The largest religious minority of the country is Hindu, comprising 9% according to the 2001 census. Christianity and Buddhism are also followed by a very small segment of the population.

of these interactions, and demonstrates that the most positive impact of these interactions has been the strengthening of the country's syncretistic[136] tradition, while the most negative impact has been the spread of sectarianism.

The responses of society and the state in recent years to transnational Islam are the focus of the paper's fourth section. It is argued that the state has facilitated—whether by choice or its inability to oppose them—the entry of both pietistic organizations, like the Tabligh Jamaat (TJ), and militant organizations, like Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), into the country. The societal responses to the influence of transnational ideas and organizations have been mixed, as this section also shows.

The content of transnational Islamic/Islamist messages and the diverse strategies employed to propagate them are discussed in the paper's fifth section. As this section shows, transnational Islamism insists on a global Muslim identity and presents the *umma* (the global Muslim community) as a political community of faith. The popular conduits for the transmission of transnational Islam's message in Bangladesh include satellite television and DVDs, on the one hand, as well as local oral traditions, on the other.[137] New modes of communication, such as *halaqa* (informal study groups), have also been popularized in recent years.

Finally, this paper presents possible future trajectories of transnational Islam in Bangladesh, drawing policy implications from the paper's central findings. The author argues that the interactions between transnational and local Islam will not be unidirectional, nor will they traverse one single trajectory. Furthermore, global and domestic political developments will influence these trajectories as much as the strengths of the forces involved.

Background

Bangladesh emerged as a secularist state in 1971 as the result of a decade-long linguistic nationalist movement and a long brutal war against Pakistan. The most significant element of the nationalist movement that brought Bangladesh into being was the replacement of religion with ethnicity as the primordial marker of identity. The country framed its constitution in 1972, incorporating secularism as one of the four state principles in the constitution, while proscribing the use of religion in politics.

The declaration of secularism as a state principle, in theory, consigned religion to the private realm, and therefore did away with the mix of religion and politics. However, the meaning of "secularism" remained vague to both the ruling elites and the common masses. The government soon began undercutting the spirit of secularism through an array of activities including broadcasting religious programs on the state-controlled media. Political leaders also began using religious expressions in their speeches. The country joined the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Islamists who had collaborated with the Pakistani Army in its genocidal war against the Bengali population were pardoned through a general amnesty.[138]

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[136] Syncretic here refers to the incorporation of local cultural practices which are not attached to conventional Islamic rituals and practices, especially those found in the Arabic-speaking Muslim world.

[137] The Internet, which has become a major conduit in many parts of the world in transmitting Islamist ideology and thoughts, is not a significant mode of transmission in Bangladesh. Given its limited reach within the country, Bangladeshi Islamists have yet to harness the potentials of the Internet.

[138] The decision came after all Pakistani military personnel, including 195 charged with war crimes, were handed over to Pakistan as a result of an agreement between India and Pakistan. The government also faced pressure from the international community, particularly Muslim countries, not to prosecute the members of the Pakistani Army and their local supporters.

At the same time, many socio-religious organizations in the country continued propagating religious messages and events tied to religion were celebrated. Not only did the tradition of *waz mahfils* (public scriptural commentary) and *urs*[139] continue, the government allowed the madrassas (Islamic seminaries), particularly of Deobandi persuasion, to impart Islamic education despite the nationalization of education. The education commission, appointed to devise a uniform education system, recommended the maintenance of religious educational institutions (REIs) and religious studies within the mainstream curriculum in its 1974 report.

A latent tension between the idea of secularism and the role of religion thus remained within Bangladeshi society. The absence of a clear understanding of secularism had an important role primarily in maintaining, and perhaps intensifying, this tension.

A latent tension between the idea of secularism and the role of religion thus remained within Bangladeshi society. The absence of a clear understanding of secularism had an important role primarily in maintaining, and perhaps intensifying, this tension.

Islam gained a more visible role in the public arena after the demise of the Awami League government headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.[140] The military regime of Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981) brought changes to the state principles, replacing secularism with "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah," and allowing the religion-based political parties to participate in the political process. The regime also directly encouraged religious activities, befriended Islamists, and incorporated religious education as part of the school curriculum. The government also insisted on the Muslim identity of the Bangladeshi population as opposed to their ethnic identity.

A closer relationship with Muslim countries in the Middle East and Gulf became the hallmark of the country's foreign policy under Ziaur Rahman. These steps were taken further by Ziaur Rahman's successor, General Hussain Muhammad Ershad, who usurped the state power in 1982 through another coup. The Ershad regime, in its bid to gain political legitimacy, declared Islam the state religion in 1988.

One of the defining features of the Ziaur Rahman and Ershad regimes was their belief in the role of Islam in public life and in politics. These regimes succeeded in bringing Islam into the country's political discourse and strengthened the legitimacy of Bangladesh's Islamists—both constitutionally and politically.

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139 *Urs* is the celebration of the anniversary of the death of Sufis or saints by devotees at the saint's shrine.

140 Mujibur Rahman, his close associates, and most members of his family were brutally killed in a *coup d'etat* in 1975.

Locating Islam

The size of the Bangladesh's Muslim population and Islam's growing influence in public life should not obfuscate the fact that there are various meanings of Islam and its role in individuals' lives in the country. While religiosity is important, individual practice of Muslim rituals varies enormously. Artifacts of traditional popular culture—for example, folk songs—emphasize the mystic tradition within Islam; veneration of *pirs* (saints) and *mazars* (shrines) are common practices which draw on local tradition;[141] and the *ulama* in Bangladesh are adherents of various *madhabs* and *maslak* (ways or creed).

Lived Islam in Bangladesh can be broadly divided into two categories: social Islam and political Islam (see Table 1).[142] The traditional and daily practices, social institutions which occasionally draw on interpretations of Islam, and the religious mindset of the common people comprise social Islam. The defining characteristics of this category are that its practitioners are not guided by scripturalist interpretations of Islam (i.e., literal interpretations of the Qu'ran and hadiths), are inclusive of various opinions, practice Islam without any rigidity and underscore individual piety.

Political Islam, on the other hand, is guided by the political objectives of Islamist organizations. For these organizations, Islam is a political ideology, and there is only one acceptable, "true" interpretation of Islam. These organizations insist that, for individual Muslims, working toward societal change is a sacred responsibility, no less important than their personal salvation.

TABLE 1 Variations of Islam in Bangladesh

Social Islam				
Sufi Tradition	***Pirs* and *Mazars***	**Tabligh Jamaat**	**Traditional Institutions and Practices**	**"Religiosity"**
Mujaddadiya; Chistiya; Nakshbandia; Quaderia	Furfura; Jainpuri; Sharshina; Chor Monai; Atrashi; Enayetpuri; Fultali ***Mazars*** Bayazid Bostami; Shah Jalal; Khan Jahan Ali; Maijbhandari	*Dawa*; annual congregation; apolitical gatherings	*Salish* (informal arbitration); *fatwa* (edict); madrassa (religious seminary)	Celebration of Eid; restraints during Ramadan; use of Islamic greetings; fearful of religious sanctions, but non-followers in daily lives

[141] While there are *pirs* who have appeared only in the last century, there are *mazars* which have existed for centuries. The widespread appeal of *pirs* and *mazars* extends beyond the Muslim community. In Table 1, the author has cited four shrines: the shrines of Bayazid Bostami located in Chittagong; Shah Jalal in Sylhet; Khan Jahan Ali located in Khulna; and Maijbhandari of Chittagong. By no means is this list exhaustive, but it is indicative of a tradition in Bengal and, later, Bangladesh which is still vibrant and appealing to a large mass of people.

[142] Understandably, this categorization is simplistic and is not equipped to deal with Bangladeshi society's rich diversity. However, the use of this category is intended to underscore the fact that there is no monolithic Islam in Bangladesh.

Political Islam		
Mainstream Islamists	**Radical**	**Militant**
Islam as a political ideology; adheres to certain interpretation of Islam; *shari'a* or a variant of *shari'a* is preferred; accommodative; participants in (secular) constitutional politics; create bases with political goals in mind	Islam as a political ideology; strict political interpretation of Islam; plan to implement *shari'a*; no desire to participate in (secular) constitutional politics; maintains close relationship with external entities; militancy—if and when necessary	Islam as political ideology and "a way of life"; orthodox interpretation of Islam; rural based; despise the "secular" nature of the constitution and the social life; maintains external connections; views militancy as a legitimate means

Notwithstanding the similarities, there are at least three broad subgroups within the political Islam category depending on the organization's political and organizational strategies vis-à-vis electoral politics. Further exploration of the landscape of Islamist politics, particularly the pronounced goals and objectives of the extant organizations, shows that there are at least five kinds of Islamist parties currently operating within Bangladesh (see Table 2). Of these Islamist parties, those which fall within the first four categories operate within mainstream politics, while those in the fifth category are clandestine and some have been proscribed since 2005.

TABLE 2 Taxonomy of Islamist Political Parties in Bangladesh[143]

Type	Distinguishable Traits	Name of the Parties
Pragmatist/Opportunist	Want to establish Islamic social order in society through the state; believe in "Islamic revolution"; participate in elections; support-base is wide-ranging	Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) Bangladesh
Idealist and Orthodox	Want a pure Islamic state; support base is largely within privately operated Deoband-style madrassas known as *qwami* madrassas	Jamiyate Ulema-e-Islam; Khelafat Andolon; Ahle Hadith; Islami Morcha; Khelafat Mojlish; Nejam-e-Islam (Some of the above political parties founded a seven-party coalition called the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), or the Islamic United Alliance.)
***Pir*-centric and *Mazar*-based**	Aim to establish a state based on traditional Islam and *shari'a*; party organized around individuals; weak support-base	Zaker Party; Islami Shashontantra Andolon (Islamic Constitution Movement); Bangladesh Tariqat Federation
Urban Elite-Centric	Want to establish *khilafat* (caliphate); internationally connected; highly educated middle class leadership; yet to take part in elections	Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh
Jihadists/ Militant Groups	Militant Islamists who aim to establish an Islamic state in Bangladesh through jihad; international connection, particularly with Pakistani militant groups	Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B); Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB); Hijbut Tawheed; Shahadat-e-Al Hikma

[143] Ali Riaz and Kh. Ali Ar Raji, "Who Are the Islamists?" in Ali Riaz and C. Christine Fair (eds.), *Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh* (forthcoming).

It is important to note that in recent years some organizations have blurred the boundaries between social Islam and political Islam, especially those that are *pir*-centric and *mazar*-based. Until the 1980s, cases of the involvement of *pirs* in Bangladeshi politics were few and far between, and *mazars* were never associated with political activism. Urban elite-centric and militant Islamists—the two groups of parties that are more connected to transnational Islamist ideas—have emerged in the last two decades.

These categories and subcategories of lived Islam coexist within society and therefore they interact, adapt, accommodate and compete with each other. As much as they are influenced by local cultures, they bring in "external" influences and, as such, within the context of this paper, they represent "transnational" Islam. The results of these interactions are by no means predetermined. The ideas generated outside the boundaries of Bangladesh shape and reshape the practices within the country.

It is well to bear in mind that the impact on "social Islam" is distinctly different from that on "political Islam." In the case of the former, the societal practices, articles of clothing, and social expressions are changed without any implications for the political system and often are limited to individuals. The latter, however, calls for a change in the system of governance, encourages group activities, insists on activism, and if necessary, challenges the extant political system. Therefore, these forms of impact call for different responses—from both society and from the state.

Historical Antecedents and Long-Term Impacts

The interplay of religion and social movements and political activism, and the interactions between "transnational" Islamic ideas and "local" practices in post-independence Bangladesh should not be viewed as unprecedented. On the contrary, the region now called Bangladesh witnessed the arrival of transnational Islamic ideas and movements during British colonial rule (1757-1947).

Three movements, one of which is still alive and vibrant worldwide, are worth mentioning here. They are: the Faraizi Movement, the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiya, and the Tabligh Jamaat (TJ). The revivalist Faraizi movement, founded by Haji Shariatullah (1781–1840), was inspired by Muhammad bin Abdl Wahab of Hijaz and spread through a large part of eastern Bengal in the early nineteenth century. The movement took a violent form under Dudu Miyan (1819-1862) and fought battles against the British rulers.[144] The death of Dudu Miyan and the highly repressive measures of the colonial rulers resulted in the demise of the movement.

The Tariqah-i-Muhammadiya movement, pioneered by Shah Sayyid Ahmad (1780–1831) of Rai Barelwi and Shah Ismail (1782–1831), began in northern India and reached Bengal during the 1820s and 1830s. In Bengal the movement was led by the peasant leader Sayyid Nisar Ali, alias Titu Mir (1782–1831), who fought against the British army and died in battle. In Bengal the movement also played a key role in raising funds for the mujahideen who fought against the British in the northwestern frontier region.

Although these two movements found support within the peasant community for various reasons specific to the time and context, their universal religious appeal was no less significant. Importantly, leaders of these revivalist movements underscored the role of the community as a

[144] It should be noted here that the movement had a class dimension to it. In many instances the participation of Muslim peasants was guided by socio-economic consideration. The Muslim peasants were protesting against the upper caste Hindu landlords and moneylenders.

group instead of the individual in attaining the goal of establishing a pure Islamic society. The Tabligh Jamaat (discussed further below), on the contrary, insists on personal piety. The movement, founded in the late 1920s by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944), reached Bengal within a short time of its inception and had become a principal revivalist movement by the end of the century.

The current context of interactions between local and transnational Islamic movement and ideas, therefore, has a historical background; the interactions have many antecedents—during colonial rule and afterwards. These interactions have impacted Bangladeshi society both positively and negatively. The most palpable positive long-term impact has been the strengthening of the syncretistic tradition of Islam. As such, the Islamic tradition in Bengal and, later, Bangladesh has successfully adapted to Hinduism and other religious traditions. The adaptation and accommodation of various religious and cultural traditions have enriched the experience of the Muslim community. By allowing shared customs, traditions and practices to be part of a universal faith, the adherents have learned that monolithic Islam is nonexistent and unrealistic. In the long-run, these interactions have made Islam stronger and more appealing to the people of Bangladesh. Additionally, Islam was never considered as an exogenous idea nor were Muslims seen as migrants to the country.[145]

The most significant negative impact of transnational ideas has been the importation of sectarianism.

The most significant negative impact of transnational ideas has been the importation of sectarianism. Until recently, sectarian and denominational differences had never featured in the public discourse and treatment of individuals in Bangladesh. Shia-Sunni differences have had no relevance to the social and/or political life of the region that now comprises Bangladesh. In post-independence Bangladesh, sectarianism remained a non-issue, particularly due to the small number of adherents to Shiism. However, since the mid-1980s, denominational differences with the Ahmadiyya[146] community have been highlighted by a group of Islamists under the banner of the Khatme Nabuwat (KN) Movement (discussed below). KN has engendered an intolerant environment in Bangladesh, and the Ahmadiyya community has come under virulent attacks.

Recent Experience and Responses of the State and Society in Bangladesh

In recent years, the influences of transnational Islamic thought and organizations on Bangladesh's socio-political landscape have arrived through a number of channels. Some of these

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145 A number of scholars have documented the tradition of adaptation and inclusion of Islam in Bengal as the religion has influenced the local culture and vice-versa. The most prominent among these scholars (and their works) are: Richard Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204-1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984); Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengal Muslims 1871-1906: A Quest for Identity*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: OUP, 1996); and Sufia M. Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity, and Language in an Islamic Nation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

146 Ahamdiyya, also called Qadiani, is a small Muslim sect. Ahmadiyyas are the followers of reformist Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) who hails from Qadian, in Punjab, India. Ahmadiyyas claim to practice the Islam that was taught and practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Some Muslim groups—from both Sunni and Shia sects—insist that the Ahamdiyyas are non-Muslims. The acceptance of the finality of the Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet has been cited as the main source of contention between the mainstream Muslim sects and the Ahmadiyyas. In 1973, the Pakistani government declared Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims.

channels have been in place for some time (for example, the Tabligh Jamaat); some have emerged as unintended consequences (emerging, for example, from short-term migration of Bangladeshis to states in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf); and some have been fostered by external entities (for example, the Khatme Nabuwat Movement and Islamic charity organizations). Primarily, the social milieu has been affected by these transnational Islamic currents, but their impact is also felt within the political arena.

Some transnational influences have borne directly on the political system of the country. Two prominent ones in this regard are the urban-based Islamist organizations, such as the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), connected to the London-based international operation of the HT, and the militant organizations, such as the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJIB), and its front organization, the Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMJB), with close links to militant Islamist groups based in Pakistan. The following is a discussion of some the key transnational organizations and influences at play in Bangladesh and state and societal responses to their presence and activities.

Tabligh Jamaat

In post-independence Bangladesh, as religion-based political parties were proscribed and the Islamist parties had lost ground due to their role in the 1971 war, the Tabligh Jamaat continued with its *dawa*, or missionary, movement. Contrary to the popular perception that TJ only targets poor, rural populations for its membership, this social movement attracts members from various levels of Bangladeshi society. The three TJ headquarters (*markaz*) established in Dhaka, Khulna and Chittagong[147] during the Pakistan era (1947-1971) remained fully operational. With a new leadership in place (Maulana Abdul Aziz) in 1971, the TJ continued with its work.

One of the TJ's key leaders in then East Pakistan between 1947 and 1971, Mohsin Ahmed was a faculty member at the Engineering College in Dhaka. He provided leadership even after independence. The other person with considerable influence within the TJ's leadership was Maulana Ali Akbar from Brahmanbaria. In Dhaka, the Karkrail mosque was used as the venue for the TJ's annual congregation in 1954 and developed into a large mosque in subsequent years to act as the country's TJ headquarters. After holding the annual congregation in several other cities within the country, it was moved to the present venue, in Tongi, near the industrial town outside Dhaka, in 1967. The TJ's mass congregation, described as the *Bishwa Ijtima*, brings together about three million members of the movement from 70 countries.[148] It is the largest gathering of Muslims outside Saudi Arabia.

The Tabligh Jamaat's open and non-hierarchical structure has helped to increase its following in Bangladesh. Between 1992 and 2001, Abdul Mukit, the younger brother of Mohsin Ahmed, acted as first among equals in the collective leadership of the organization.[149] A *shura* (TJ's highest policy-making body), comprising seven members, leads the movement. The members include medical

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147 Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at* (Hyderabad, India: Orient Longman, 2002), 183.

148 See "Three million Muslims join mass prayer in Bangladesh seeking peace," *International Herald Tribune*, February 3, 2007.

149 Mumtaz Ahmad, personal communication, January 2005. Professor Ahmad has done extensive fieldwork on the TJ in Bangladesh and Pakistan over the years.

doctors, engineers, and educators, among others. The leadership is reflective of the composition of its membership as the movement has a large following within the educated segments of society.[150]

The state's response in the early years was to disregard the TJ's existence as if it was a fringe movement with a very small following. But in the post-1975 period the movement began to attract the attention of the government and opposition politicians alike. Since then, Bangladesh's president, prime minister, members of the cabinet, and the leader of the opposition each year attend the last day of the TJ's mass congregation to join the final prayer.[151] The members of the TJ travel within and outside the country in groups, and the Kakrail mosque hosts hundreds of TJ followers from various countries all year round.

Observers attribute the success of the TJ in Bangladesh and elsewhere to the organization's non-controversial and non-sectarian message, direct personal appeal, the movement's building of communities through communal living during the *gasht* (travel), and mutual moral-psychological support during the TJ's *chillahs* (40 days of travel in a group).[152] One of the interesting results of the growing visibility and popularity of the TJ is the transnational dimension of the movement.[153]

If the TJ has brought a non-hierarchical, open, inclusive, community-based understanding of Islam to public attention in Bangladesh, the Khatme Nabuwat movement and the short-term migrants have brought a completely opposite concept of Islam from abroad. The migrants' exposure to a strict "Islamic" practice in Middle Eastern countries has fueled orthodoxy and emphasis on textual Islam. The latter runs counter to Bangladesh's syncretistic tradition, but has gained salience in recent years.

Khatme Nabuwat Movement

The denominational difference with the Ahmadiyya community was first featured at the local level in Brahmanbaria, a district town southeast of Dhaka, when Syed Abdul Wahed, a *pir* and the head *maulana* (scholar) of a local school, began preaching Ahmadiyya thought in 1912. In an effort to counter this preaching, a madrassa of Deobandi persuasion named the Jamia Yunusia Madrassah was founded in 1915 by Maulana Abu Taher Muhammad Yunus of Muzaffarpur, India. The tension arising over the Ahmadiyya community remained local until 1987.[154]

In the late 1980s, the Jamia Yunusia Madrassah and *ulama* connected with the madrassa took the lead in founding the Bangladesh chapter of the Khatme Nabuwat Movement, modeled after a similar organization in Pakistan, to demand that the Ahmadiyya community be declared non-Muslim. It should be stressed that the KN did not grow from within Bangladesh, but was cultivated by activists with direct connections to the Pakistani organization. With the rise of sectarianism in Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s, Bangladesh witnessed a growing tendency to identify Muslims

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150 For example, the newly appointed (2008) chief justice of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, Justice Ruhul Amin, is reportedly a member of the TJ. Muhammad Yeahia Akhter, in a survey of 20 Tabligh members found that six of them are civil servants, four are teachers, three businessmen, two students, two engineers, a non-government employee, a banker and an army official. 14 of the respondents of the survey are 40 years or older; 16 of them either have a baccalaureate or higher degree. Muhammad Yeahia Akhter, *Tabligh Jamaat: Imani Andoloner Somajtatik Bisleshon* (Tabligh Jamaat: Sociological Analysis of the Faith Movement, in Bengali) (Dhaka: Adorn Publication, 2006), 144-147.

151 In 1996, the government led by Khaleda Zia permanently allocated 160 acres of land for the TJ's mass congregation. In 2000, the government of Sheikh Hasina announced that the land would be handed over to the TJ. Ibid., 84 and 89.

152 Discussions with Mumtaz Ahmad helped the author in identifying these factors in the TJ's success.

153 Although the TJ officially does not insist that Islam transcends boundaries of the nation-state and, therefore, that a sense of global community among Muslims must be formed, many Bangladeshis have nevertheless derived this message from the presence and works of the TJ. This observation is based on the author's conversations with a number of people in January 2008 in Bangladesh. Respondents were from various socio-economic strata of society.

154 For instances of recent attacks on the Ahmadiyya community see, Ali Riaz, *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: A Complex Web* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 35-36; and *Breach of Faith: Persecution of the Ahmadiyya Community in Bangladesh*, Human Rights Watch 17, no. 6(C) (June 2005).

by their denominational affiliation. The demonization of and virulent attacks on the Ahmadiyya community, and demands to declare them non-Muslims (*a la* Pakistan) is a case in point.

The attacks on the Ahmadiyya community, which have increased significantly in recent years and had received the tacit support of the government between 2001 and 2006, have contributed to social tension and conflict in Bangladesh. The rise of the KN and subsequent incidents of violence with the possibility of long-term consequences akin to Pakistan are a striking example of how local and external Islamic groups cooperate to construct an issue with disturbing impacts on society and politics.

Short-Term Migration

Between 1976 and January 2002, the number of Bangladeshis who migrated on short-term employment contracts to foreign countries was about three million, of which 82% went to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Libya, Bahrain, and Oman. Saudi Arabia alone accounts for half of the workers who migrated from Bangladesh during this period. These unskilled young male workers with little education, mostly drawn from Bangladesh's rural areas, stayed abroad on average for about four years, during which time they were exposed to a very restrictive religious environment. With very little understanding of the social dynamics of the host countries, the migrants concluded that these countries represented ideal Islamic societies. Often the migrants returned with a very different idea of Islam, thanks to the social system of these countries.

The presence of retrogressive social values and less tolerant interpretations of Islam in the birthplace of the religion were thus misunderstood as authentic Islam. Upon the migrants' return, they insist on practicing their newly acquired religious values at home, within their families and the community, and attempt to reproduce these values through establishing madrassas of Deobandi persuasion. This devastating social cost brought by the economic opportunities of short-term migration has never been adequately dealt with by the state or society. Economic consideration has compelled the state to expand the labor market and export more unskilled and semi-skilled labor to the above mentioned countries. Although unintended, this has opened the door to varying, and often intolerant, interpretations of Islam in Bangladesh.

Islamic Charities

The idea of less-tolerant Islam has also become more influential due to the proliferation of so-called Islamic charity organizations in Bangladesh. These charity organizations include: the Kuwait-based Restoration of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS, Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turah al-Islami) and Dawlatul Kuwait; the Saudi-based Al-Haramian Foundation and Hayatul Igachha; South Africa-based Servants of Suffering Humanity (SOSH); Emirates-based Al-Fujira; the Dubai-based Al-Ansar Al-Khairiah; the Bahrain-based Dawlatul Bahrain, and the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). These organizations have funded or supported madrassas and social organizations which teach and propagate scripturalist, sectarian and militant Islamic ideology.

The process began in the late-1970s, but took a leap in the 1990s as more and more organizations arrived and the government did not monitor their activities.[155] In the 1980s and the 1990s, Islamic charities were allowed to operate in areas where the work of other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had been severely restricted. Many of these organizations were found to be

[155] For details of the activities of these organizations and their roles in supporting militant groups, see Riaz, *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh*, 83-86.

directly supporting the Ahle Hadith group in Bangladesh which founded a number of madrassas throughout the rural areas. These madrassas have been used as recruiting and training centers for members of the militant group Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (discussed below).

New Faces of Transnational Islam

The most prominent representatives of transnational Islamist ideology in Bangladesh's political arena are the clandestine organizations, particularly the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh, and the open, emerging group, the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT).

The genesis of the HuJIB can be traced back to its origin in Pakistan. The Pakistani organization came into being in the early 1980s as a group of supporters for the Afghan resistance. In the early 1990s, the organization expanded its operation in other parts of the world. The expansion plan was guided by its ideological position—to initiate a struggle for Muslim rights in non-Muslim countries such as the Philippines and Myanmar. In this context, Myanmar was high on the priority list of the HuJI's international organizers.[156]

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It was during the expansion phase of the organization that Shafiqur Rahman, a Bangladeshi who took part in the Afghan war, was contacted and the HuJI's Bangladesh chapter began its clandestine operation.[157] It is widely reported in the press that Abdur Rahman Faruqi was the first to lead HuJI's Bangladesh chapter, but died in Afghanistan in 1989. Maulana Rahmatullah, alias Shawkat Osman, alias Sheikh Farid, now leads HuJIB.[158]

The existence of the organization came to light on April 30, 1992, a week after the mujahideen emerged victorious in Afghanistan. The Bangladeshi participants of the war expressed their delight at a press conference in Dhaka where the speakers identified themselves as members of HuJI-Bangladesh.[159] Until 1996 HuJIB's activities were largely restricted to the southeastern hills close to the border with Myanmar which suggests that their initial objective was to use Bangladesh as a launching pad to influence the Rohinga movement (the Muslims of Myanmar who fled the

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156 Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

157 It is worth mentioning that, beginning in 1984, Bangladeshi Islamists organized a "volunteer corps" to join the Afghan jihad. Some 3,000 people under the leadership of Abdur Rahman Faruki were "motivated" to travel in several batches to Afghanistan and fight alongside other volunteer mujahideen. Over the following four years at least 24 of them died and ten were disabled. In 1988, a delegation of ten self-proclaimed *ulama* from Bangladesh visited Afghanistan. See, *Islami Biplob* (Islamic Revolution), a bulletin published from Sylhet. Also see: Julfikar Ali Manik, "Huji kingpin's coalition link keeps cops at bay," *Daily Star*, November 7 2005.

158 Intelligence sources interviewed in Dhaka, December 2006; Bertil Lintner, "Bangladesh: Breeding ground for Muslim terror," *Asia Times*, September 21, 2002; Zayadul Ahsan, "Profiles show them interlinked," *Daily Star*, August 28, 2005.

159 Interview of reporters including Zayadul Ahsan in Dhaka, in December 2005; Ahsan and a number of reporters were present at the press conference.

persecution of the Myanmar military and took refuge in Bangladesh). HuJIB built a number of training camps in the southeastern hill districts.

In 1996, the arrests of 41 HuJIB militants in a training camp in a southeastern district town with a huge arms cache exposed the HuJIB operations and their bases.[160] The organizers immediately moved to districts in the northern and northwestern parts of the country. The HuJIB and the homegrown militant group called the Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) joined forces in 1998. HuJIB operatives arrested on various occasions claimed that the organization has about 15,000 members, though this number could not be verified.

HuJIB has been involved in a number of operations since 1996, including several attempts to assassinate Sheikh Hasina. On July 20, 2000 the group planted a 76 kg bomb in a public venue in Kotalipara where Hasina was scheduled to visit.[161] An early discovery of the bomb saved the life of the then prime minister. The group made another attempt on August 21, 2004. It attacked a public gathering in the capital Dhaka organized by the then opposition party, the Awami League. A series of grenade attacks on the gathering cost 23 lives including that of a central leader of the party. Hasina escaped unhurt, although she was the primary target, according to the confessional statements of the key HuJIB leaders.[162] The organization, in conjunction with the JMB, exploded 450 homemade bombs throughout the country on August 17, 2005 followed by a number of suicide attacks.[163]

The connections between the external militant organizations and Bangladeshi groups are no longer one-way. For example, the HuJIB is reported to have developed close connections with militants in Pakistan and India. HuJIB operatives arrested in India in 2006 and 2008 have confessed that they received training and funds from Pakistan's Jaish-i-Muhammad and Lashkar-i-Tayyiba.[164] The organization has also trained militants in Bangladesh to engage in subversive activities in India, three operatives arrested in India told New Delhi police. The confessional statements also indicate that militant leaders from Pakistan had traveled to Bangladesh to recruit, organize, train and disburse funds.

Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh

The Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh (HTB) is the country chapter of the London-based HT. The HT launched its Bangladesh chapter on November 17, 2001. This chapter was established at the initiative of a professor of Dhaka University. He came into contact with the HT while studying in England and, upon his return to Bangladesh, he organized a small group at the university.[165] The party spokesperson Muhiuddin Ahmed is a faculty member at the university.

The HT envisions a *shari'a*-based *khilafah* (caliphate) state. The HT is the only Islamist organization to speak of the *khilafat*, and to acknowledge its international connection. Interestingly, the HT in Bangladesh "has been gaining most momentum through its activities at the country's

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160 Case number 100/96, Special Tribunal, Cox's Bazaar.

161 The event was reported in the press at the time of the incident, and later acknowledged by Mufti Hannan, a leader of the HuJIB during interrogation. See Asraful Huq, "Harkatul Jihad banned - Crackdown on militant outfits," *Independent* (Dhaka), October 18, 2005.

162 "Abu Zandal confesses to carrying out Aug 21 attack," *Daily Star*, February 21, 2008; and, "Aug 21 attack was aimed at killing Hasina: Huji leader confesses before court," *Daily Star*, April 26, 2008.

163 For a summary of events, see Riaz, *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh*, 1-2.

164 "HuJI Bangladesh has connections with Indian and Pakistani Militants, Mursalin and Muttakin tell Delhi Police," (in Bengali), *Prothom Alo* (Dhaka), May 16, 2008.

165 It is worth mentioning that the HT's British chapter has a significant presence among the second and third generation British-Bangladeshis living in London. For details see, Ed Hussain, *The Islamist* (London: Penguin, 2007).

universities."[166] What makes the HT distinctly different from other Islamist political organizations, including the clandestine ones, is that its political agenda is global, not confined to Bangladesh. The final stage of the three-stage revolution envisioned by the HT, according to the organization's documents, is: "establishing government, implementing Islam generally and comprehensively, and carrying it as a message to the world."[167]

Until 2005, HTB members did not take part in any street agitation. During the political crisis in late 2006, HTB activists organized several public discussion programs and a roundtable to press their position. HTB members have also been involved in various agitation programs since 2006. After the 2007 declaration of emergency, for instance, 22 HTB activists were arrested at a secret meeting.[168] They were released in April without charge. In September 2007, HTB took the lead in organizing protests against publication of an allegedly blasphemous cartoon in a local daily newspaper. In April 2008, HTB activists were at the forefront of the protest against the government's women's development policy. These demonstrations became violent and the police were attacked.

Jamaat-i-Islami's Transnational Links

While the majority of Bangladesh's Islamist parties operating within mainstream politics have few external links, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) maintains a close connection with its counterparts elsewhere, particularly in Pakistan. The connections are not openly acknowledged but neither are they denied by JI's leaders. However, Maulana Nawabzada Nabiullah Khan, a confidant of and adviser to the *amir* (chief) of Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan insisted in an interview in 1999 that during Zia-ul Haq's regime, "two secret meetings of the JI leaders of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh were held at Peshawar and Multan at which the leaders of India and Bangladesh agreed to work under the overall direction of Pakistan's JI for this purpose [i.e., destabilizing Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir]."[169]

The transnational connection of the JI Bangladesh is not only through Pakistan, but more significantly through the Bangladeshi diaspora in England, particularly in East London. The JI has a significant presence within and receives support from the Bangladeshi community. The transnational connection via England began developing in the late 1970s when former JI activists established the Dawat-ul Islam. The leadership included Chowdhury Muinuddin, Abu Sayeed and Lutfur Rahman, all of whom were members of the Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan until 1971 and were allegedly members of the paramilitary forces which supported the Pakistani Army in 1971.

The establishment of the Dawat-ul Islam, its youth fronts—the Young Muslim Organization (YMO) and the Young Muslim Sisters—and a number of charity organizations in the late 1970s created a more visible and strong network within the Bangladeshi community. The changing

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166 Mahfuz Sadique, "Islam's New Face?" New Age (Dhaka), December 12, 2005, http://www.newagebd.com/2005/nov/04/eidspecial05/non-fiction03.html.

167 "The Method of Hizb-ut Tahrir," http://www.khilafat.org/newPages/Hizb/htahrir.php#The_Method. This is the official website of the HUT Bangladesh chapter.

168 "22 Hizbut Tahrir men held while holding secret meet in city," *Daily Star*, March 31, 2007.

169 Islam Watch, "What Islam Wants: Let's Hear From Pakistan Jamat-e-Islami Leader, Maulana Nabiullah Khan," http://www.islamreview.com/articles/What_Islam_Wants.shtml; and B Raman, "Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami: The Hidden Agenda," *South Asia Analysis Group Paper*, August 27, 1999. Nawabzada also commented: "Bangladesh was not a result of a language riot. The very idea that they are Muslims will bring the Bangladeshis to Arabic. We already fund heavily the Arabic language courses all over India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. From Morocco to Iraq people speak in Arabic; I don't see any reason why from Morocco to Burma we will not bring Arabic to the people. Even Bangladesh will start speaking in Arabic. That time there won't be any Bangladesh where the country name itself has the name of the language. Yes. Right now our aim is just for reunification without touching on the language issue of Bengali. JI of Bangladesh is working towards this aim."

political landscape at home—i.e., the rise of the Islamists, particularly the JI, in Bangladesh—was far more than a source of moral encouragement for the Islamists abroad as material support also began to arrive.

The Dawat-ul Islam gradually established its influence over the East London Mosque. According to one observer, "The East London Mosque (and its affiliate, the London Muslim Centre [LMC]) shares the ideology of the Jamaat-e-Islami. The mosque is no fringe organization; it was at the centre of the campaign that helped elect the local Respect party candidate and vocal critic of Britain's New Labour government, George Galloway, in the 2005 general election."[170] One of the Dawat-ul Islam's key developments was also the establishment of Muslim Aid in 1985. The organization soon became a global network.

In 1989, a group of Dawat-ul Islam members left the organization and established the Islamic Forum for Europe (IFE) under the leadership of Muinuddin. The YMO followed Muinuddin's leadership and switched their allegiance to the IFE. Both Dawat-ul Islam and the IFE continued to maintain their contacts with the Jamaat-i-Islami of Bangladesh.

The protests against Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* accelerated the universalization of the message of oppression, and its transcendence from a culturally defined and spatially limited (Bengali) community to a global (Muslim) community. The most significant effect of the Rushdie affair was that it created a national network of Islamists, initially the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) and later the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), both led by the followers of JI ideologue Abul Ala Mawdudi. The events, especially the communication among activists from other countries and the use of an extant JI network in England showed that the JI is no longer just a "national" organization but is capable of leading a transnational movement. Gilles Kepel, documenting the organization of the protest both in South Asia and Britain, concluded that, "the speed of the operation showed the efficiency and perfect coordination of the 'Islamist International' created by Mawdudi's disciples, which was able to run parallel campaigns in India and Britain."[171]

State and Societal Responses

As noted above, the Bangladeshi state, since 1975, has maintained a close relationship with other Muslim countries and has never opposed the idea of external influence. A combination of factors, consequently, such as political expediency, desire for short-term gains, infiltration of Islamists within the civil administration, inefficiency of the bureaucracy, lack of intelligence capabilities, and a favorable political environment allowed a dangerous liaison to develop between militant and charitable Islamic organizations in the country. The state's limited response at the initial stage weakened its ability to halt their proliferation. The societal impact notwithstanding, the law and order situation in Bangladesh deteriorated, and soon these organizations posed a threat to the fragile democracy.

The response of the state, in regard to the militant groups, especially the HuJIB and the JMB, represent the pattern developed since 1996. The government of Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001) paid little attention to the growing strengths of the militant groups. The government disregarded the early signs of the emerging network and the intelligence reports were not given due consideration.

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170 Delwar Hussain, "Bangladeshis in east London: from secular politics to Islam," *Open Democracy*, July 7, 2006, http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-protest/bangladeshi_3715.jsp.

171 Gilles Kepel, *Allah in the West: Islamic Movements in America and Europe* (translated by Susan Milner) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 131.

The militants, on the other hand, intensified their activities, primarily because of their opposition to the ruling party which they considered as a secular party. The victory of the four-party alliance, comprising the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), in the general elections of 2001 provided a hospitable environment to these groups.

However, not only has the government continuously and vehemently denied the existence of any such groups, some members of the government have provided help and support to these groups. The remarks of Mufti Abdul Hannan, the operational commander of the HuJIB, after being arrested illustrate this point clearly. Hannan, who was convicted by a court in 2003 in absentia for attempting to kill the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina in 2000, remained a fugitive until October 1, 2005. When taken into custody Hannan claimed that he had been given assurances by the former home minister that he could safely stay within the country.[172] He told journalists that he had filed a mercy petition to the then home minister Air Vice Marshal (retired) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury on the latter's advice.[173] The existence of the connection between the militants and the BNP government was established in a case filed against a former minister. Aminul Huq, former telecommunications minister, was convicted by a court in July 2007 for abetting and aiding the militants.[174]

> …political expediency, desire for short-term gains, infiltration of Islamists within the civil administration, inefficiency of the bureaucracy, lack of intelligence capabilities, and a favorable political environment allowed a dangerous liaison to develop between militant and charitable Islamic organizations in the country.

The government, under pressure from the international community, banned the HuJIB on October 17, 2005. The military-backed caretaker government has intensified their efforts since assuming power in January 2007 to apprehend the leaders of the organization but recent press reports suggest that the network has remained intact.[175]

The societal responses to the influence of transnational Islamic currents in the country have been mixed. In the past decade, mosque-attendance has risen significantly; articles of clothing identified with religion are more commonly available and used; and religious festivities are celebrated with more enthusiasm than ever before. These, in conjunction with the presence of

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172 "Mufti Hannan Captured: Militant kingpin tells of Altaf's assurance of 'no fear,'" *Daily Star*, October 2, 2005.

173 Hannan has also brought in the name of the editor of an Islamic journal, *Al-Madina*, who is also a leader of the IOJ, through whose efforts he was able to approach the minister. Altaf Hossain denied any such connection saying that, he "never met Mufti Hannan, he does not know him. So, there is no possibility of suggesting [to] him (Hannan) to submit [a] mercy petition." But the fact that a militant leader could make such a claim and that there has been some connections between the said IOJ leader and the militant is indeed disturbing, to say the least.

174 "Bangladesh jails former minister," *BBC News*, July 26, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6917317.stm.

175 Ali Riaz, "Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: What's to be Done?" *The Progressive Bangladesh*, March 20, 2008, http://www.progressivebangladesh.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124&Itemid=26.

the increased number of socio-religious organizations in Bangladesh, demonstrate that religiosity among the Bangladeshis has increased significantly.

But this development has also opened up the debate of what constitutes "authentic" Islamic practices and what constitutes "*bid'a*" (innovation), which is forbidden in Islam. *Mazars* and the disciples of *pirs* have come under attacks from the Islamists, especially those Islamists with transnational links. There has been a vigorous campaign by the transnational Islamists (and the JI) to promote the idea that the veneration of *pirs* and *mazars* is contrary to the "authentic" Islam and should be shunned altogether.[176] On the other hand, members of Bangladesh's civil society have defended these traditional practices and have argued that the traditional practices are, in fact, integral aspects of the Islam in Bangladesh.

Conduits, Messages and Strategies

While the rise of political Islam and the roles played by Islamist organizations in Bangladesh's political arena have received scholarly attention, the messages transnational Islamic organizations bring to Bangladesh and their methods for disseminating these messages have not been subjected to rigorous discussion. One of the key features of transnational Islamism is that it emphasizes the "Muslim identity" as opposed to national identities bounded by culture and geography. Reference to the *umma* and the responsibilities of the Muslim community remain central to the transnational Islamists' message.[177]

In the context of Bangladesh, perhaps as in many other societies, we are witnessing the contestation between the reinforcement of cultural identity and its new construction represented, respectively, through Bengali/Bangladeshi identity and the Muslim identity. The construction of a new identity in Bangladesh requires new cultural artifacts and new representations; transnational organizations are engaged in presenting these new artifacts and representations through a number of media.

It is well to bear in mind that transnational ideas are not presented as messages from the outside world, but as commentary on and explanation of texts such the Qur'an and hadith in the local context. Thus, the messages are presented as "authentic" and inherently connected to the "fundamentals" but explained within a modern context which makes these messages relevant and useful.

While oral tradition remains the principal mode of communication in Bangladesh, transnational media, particularly satellite television, has also become a major conduit for the Islamist message. To use the oral tradition, traditional practices and institutions are employed. *Waz mahfil* (i.e., public commentary of scriptures), is a case in point. Traditionally, *waz mahfils*, organized in both urban and rural areas as a means of preaching Islam among the believers, have been an expression of

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[176] In the backdrop of this debate bombs exploded in a number of *mazars*. For examples, the Faila Peer Mazar in Tangail was bombed on 17 January 2003; a year later, a bomb exploded at Shah Jalal's Mazar in Sylhet. In both instances local Sufi singers and devotees, were the prime targets. In December 2003 hundreds of fish in the pond within the *mazar* premise of Shah Jalal in Sylhet were poisoned. People used to feed these gigantic fish in the tank in the Mazar premise with a hope that their wishes would be fulfilled. On May 21, 2004, there was another bomb attack on Shah Jalal Mazar.

[177] This message finds a sympathetic ear for two reasons; first, the perceived inadequacy of the "national identity" forged on the basis of the idea of the nation-state. It is now well recognized that the global economic and political processes of recent decades, commonly referred to as globalization, continually undermine the validity of the twin pillars of the nation-state—i.e., the socio-political-economic organizations that allow the state to operate, and the "national identity" that provides legitimacy to these organizations. The hegemony of the nation-state-based identity has waned, if not completely ruptured. The second reason which allows the message of transnational Islamic identity to appeal to the common masses is that the erosion of the existing identity—perceived or real—brings communities either look for refuge in their long-held beliefs or attempt to construct a new identity. Stuart Hall has aptly noted that there are three possible consequences of globalization on cultural identities: erosion, reinforcing and the construction of new identities. See Stuart Hall, "The Question of Cultural Identity," in Stuart Hall, David Held and Tony McGrew (eds.), *Modernity and Its Futures* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), 273-326.

piety; but since the 1980s, these gatherings have become a forum of commentary on current affairs and thus more centered on ideology rather than on theology. Although a significant proportion of the *mahfils* are conducted by *maulanas* with very little knowledge of Islamic theology, some are being taken over by Islamists with a specific political agenda.

As these *mahfils* have emerged as the most authoritative sources for the interpretation of Islam and its relevance in the lives of a large number of Bangladeshis, the *mahfils*' influence has grown remarkably. The messages are blended with local contexts and wrapped around current local and global political situations to appeal to the masses. The most notable speaker leading these *mahfils* is Delawar Hossain Saidee, a member of parliament and JI's central committee. Saidee uses a distinctly different style of rhetoric and a belligerent style of presentation, and loads his speeches with overt political content. His presentations are meant to assail the secularists, and provide an ideology-driven, politically-motivated interpretation of Islam. These speeches are recorded and sold as audio and video cassettes.

Along with traditional oral practices, new practices are introduced. The most prominent new practices include the informal group meetings, often referred to as *halaqa*, and study groups. These are employed to reach middle class and semi-literate/literate segments of Bangladeshi society. Maimuna Huq, in a perceptive exploration of these study groups in Bangladesh among JI's women activists pointed out that they are rapidly proliferating in many Muslim-majority areas throughout South Asia, and that these study circles not only revolve around the Qur'anic texts and hadiths, but also "Qur'anic commentaries and theological texts produced by authoritative traditional religious scholars, contemporary or recent."[178]

Huq further notes that these lesson circles are a key site for "the production of a particular form of Islamic subjectivity."[179] Most importantly,

> [These] lesson circles play a central role in the sustenance and expansion of Islamic movements in Bangladesh. They do so by helping reshape activists' conceptions of self, religious duty and others through a rhetoric that deploys specific notions of religiosity and religious identity, culture, state, the global Muslim community or *ummah*, and the current world order.[180]

These oral practices to spread the message, despite their proliferation in recent years, only reach a small number of people. However, the reproduction in video and audio formats of *waz mahfil* speeches is intended to make them available to a larger audience. The widespread availability of the audio and video tapes, at home and abroad, has in many ways made the impact of these speeches far-reaching. But in recent years, satellite television has become the most influential way to reach a large audience in Bangladesh.

The importance and impact of global television needs no elaboration. Since the mid-1990s the Bangladeshi government has allowed global and regional satellite stations to broadcast inside the country. Hundreds of regional and global channels are now available at reasonable cost. These global media outlets have undermined the capacity of the state to control the flow of information; political boundaries are no barriers to messages communicated to an audience living in a country

178 Maimuna Huq, "Reading the Quar'an in Bangladesh: The Politics of 'Belief' Among Islamist Women," *Modern Asian Studies*, 42 (2/3) (2008): 457-8.

179 Ibid., 459.

180 Ibid.

far away from the producers of the messages.[181] Islamists have begun to harness the power of satellite television in recent years. Two stations that have made their mark in Bangladesh are "Peace Television" and "Islamic Television."[182] Notwithstanding the debates on current issues and theological differences, these stations also provide information that reaffirms notions that the Muslim community worldwide faces adversity, and is subject to persecution in many places.

Future Trajectories and Policy Implications

Any discussions on the future of the interactions between "local" and "transnational" Islam in Bangladesh must be prefaced with the obvious fact that neither of these realities have a single, monolithic, homogenous shape; therefore they cannot bear a single trajectory. The variations in contents and conduits of both open up a variety of options for the future.

Despite the fluidity of the situation, four general points can be made with some degree of certainty. First, the future trajectories of the interactions between transnational ideas and local Islamic practices are neither predetermined nor unidirectional. In the age of instantaneous communication neither of them can remain immune; migration of people and ideas will affect each other in a variety of ways. Second, these trajectories will take place within the broader global political milieu for "transnational" Islam is innately connected to international events and ideas. One of the expressions of transnational Islam is the political Islam propagated by transnational groups with a global political agenda. The experiences of Islamist groups with circumscribed nationalist agendas and transnational militant/terrorist groups with a global plan will influence the course, if not equally.

Third, the media, particularly transnational media, and cultural artifacts will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the mentality of Bangladeshis at large. Cultural representations shape identity, and the cultures presented through global media are deconstructing the concept of national Bangladeshi identity. They are overriding the local traditions in many ways and thus opening the possibilities of replacing them with newer practices. Fourth, the role of the Bangladeshi diaspora deserves more attention than it has received thus far. The life experiences of Bangladeshis abroad—whether as short-term migrants or long-term émigrés—both in Muslim-majority countries and in Muslim-minority regions—is bound to have an impact. The new meaning they add to the universal message of Islam influences their social attitudes and activism.

The foregoing discussion has demonstrated that Bangladeshi society, like any other society, has been the site of contestation between these two different interpretations—i.e. universalistic and

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[181] For a discussion on the nation-state and global media, see Ali Riaz and Anthony DiMaggio, "The Nation-State, Global Media, and the Regime of Supervision" (book chapter under review).

[182] Islamic Television is a local station which began its test transmissions in 2005, and full-scale operation in 2007 with the blessing of the then government headed by Khaleda Zia. This station is considered as the first Islamic channel in Bangladesh. Islamic TV broadcasts local and foreign programs. These programs include talk shows from other Muslim countries, often with voice-overs in Bengali.

Peace Television describes itself as the "Islamic spiritual edutainment international satellite television channel." Founded in 2006, the station became available to Bangladeshi audiences in 2007. Peace TV's goal is to remove misconceptions about Islam, claiming that it provides programs based on "authentic teachings of the Qur'an and hadith." Peace TV is broadcast from India in English and Urdu, and is available free of cost. The programs feature speakers such as Dr. Zakir Naik, Ahmed Deedat, Dr. Israr Ahmed, Maulana Parekh, Dr. Bilal Philips, Yassir Fazaga, Abdur Rahim Green, among others. For more information about Peace TV, see http://www.peacetv.tv/about.php.

The founder and president of Peace TV, Dr. Zakir Naik, is an orator and theologian. Naik's discussions and debates on issues ranging from teachings of the Qur'an and the Bible to Islamic dietary advice are also available in DVD format. In Bangladesh, these videos are available with voice-overs in Bengali and have a following. A seller of these videos informed the author in July 2008 that sells of the videos have increased in recent months.

particularistic—for a long time. Thus, the tension and conflict we are witnessing now within Muslim societies, in general, and Bangladeshi society should not be viewed as unprecedented or cataclysmic.

However, the situation is somewhat different from earlier interactions due to the intensity and the political nature of this contestation. The case of Bangladesh demonstrates that within the political realm organizations like the Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islam are appropriating the universalistic message, and employing different strategies to implement their goals of establishing an Islamic state. This does not mean that other mainstream Islamist political parties do not subscribe to the universalistic message of Islam. Despite being preoccupied with a national agenda, these parties also subscribe to the universalistic message and thus connect their agenda with global political developments. The JI is a case in point. The JI's organizational links with similar organizations elsewhere and its positions on domestic political issues are both shaped by the party's acknowledgement of and adherence to the global Islamist movement. The important question is whether a relationship exists (and if not, whether it will be established in the future), between the universalist and nationalist organizations. The likelihood of such an alliance is not farfetched.

The importance and influence of the Islamists in general, particularly those which represent Islam as a transnational political ideology, will depend on the domestic political environment as much as global political developments. If global politics encourages the strengthening of the sense of Muslim victimhood, due to the role of the Western countries, particularly the United States, their appeal to the common masses in Bangladesh is likely to strengthen. Bangladesh's domestic political environment over the past two decades allowed the Islamists to consolidate their position; consequently, it opened the space for transnational Islamist groups to operate with state support. If the situation remains unchanged, the space for operation will widen further.

Changes in regard to the nature and scope of the interactions between local and transnational Islam have taken place at the societal level as well. The increased religiosity among the Bangladeshi population, palpable changes in dress, social behavior, and increased sensitivity towards religious issues are indicative of the ongoing changes. These changes are in part a result of the quest for a new identity. While these changes will have little bearing on political activism, they will continue to shape the worldview of individuals. Consequently, this will sharpen the disagreement with those who favor traditional local Islamic practices. At the same time, the universalistic message of the Tablighi Jamaat will continue to appeal to a segment of Bangladeshi society.

The impacts of the transnational Islamist thoughts and organizations on Muslim society have often been viewed exclusively through the security prism; consequently, studies have only addressed the question whether these interactions pose imminent threats to Western interests. The necessity to understand the security implications cannot be underestimated; but it is well to bear in mind that the security-centric approach provides only a partial picture and reduces the options available to policymakers. Additionally, contemporary developments must not be considered as entirely new phenomena; they deserve to be understood within their proper historical and social contexts. This study of the interactions of transnational and local Islam in Bangladeshi society, therefore, underscores the need for a historically grounded and nuanced understanding of both local and transnational Islam, particularly the nature and scope of their interactions, in formulating policies toward Bangladesh.

This study has further demonstrated that transnational Islamist thought and organizations are impacting upon both social and political arenas in Bangladesh and, therefore, policies should be cognizant of these twin aspects in order to be comprehensive in nature. Time and again the

political landscape receives closer attention and influences the policymaking process. But policies which disregard one of these two aspects may expect to achieve at best a limited success.

The Islamists in Bangladesh present the classic dilemma to the Western policymakers: should the Western governments engage in a dialogue with the Islamists? Policymakers' goals should include reducing the possibility of radicalization of Islamist movements while giving Islamists a stake in the system. While it is necessary to remain cognizant of the Islamists' presence in Bangladesh's political arena, the policies of Western nations should not undermine the secularist forces representing the majority of the Bangladeshi population. More importantly, the local traditional Islamic traits which encourage pietist practices and the separation of faith and politics should be highlighted and strengthened.

This study has demonstrated that in the past decade transnational Islamist thought has given rise to militant organizations in Bangladesh. These organizations receive both ideological and material support from outside the country. Some of these militant organizations now pose a threat to the country's law and order, national security and the social fabric. These forces can only be confronted by the Bangladeshi state. However, Bangladesh will need support from the international community in its fight against militancy. Emphasis should be given to the enhancement of the state's capacity for cultivating political goodwill to deal with transnational Islamist political networks which pose a threat to the country's security.

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Transnational Islam in India: Movements, Networks, and Conflict Dynamics

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the events of 9/11, transnational Islamic forces have consolidated more along religious lines with regional and local Islamic outfits to further the extremist cause worldwide. South Asia has been confronting the challenge of Islamic extremism for many years and in varied forms. Among the South Asian countries worst hit by Islamic extremism, India, with a Muslim minority population numbering over 140 million, has cradled a number of important transnational Islamic movements throughout history. As this paper shows, many of these movements have tremendous influence on present-day Islamic radicalism and grassroots activism all over the world. This paper argues that India's Muslims have largely shunned Islamic violence and radical influences, though perceived marginalization and insecurity among this minority community could prove a potential source for radicalization.

MAIN FINDINGS

While many Islamic movements arising from India remain local in influence, others have spread across the world, primarily through immigration and the Indian diaspora, missionary activities, and pilgrimages to Mecca. The roots of India's Islamist challenge can be traced to late nineteenth century India where the seeds of dominant reformist and revivalist movements were implanted, namely: the Deoband, Tablighi Jamaat, Ahle Hadith and Jamaat-i-Islami. In due course, these movements have transcended the political boundaries of the subcontinent and manifested in both violent and pietistic forms at home and elsewhere. The key principle which drives India's transnational Islamic movements (with the exception of Sufi mystic movements) is the establishment of the imaginary *Ummah* through either violent or other (e.g., conversion) means. Unlike other parts of the world where the transnational Islamic movements are intense, only a small section of India's Muslims is believed to be endorsing radical Islam, though the numbers are increasing. While India's Muslims have largely shunned Islamic terrorism, there is evidence of Indian Muslims contributing to international terrorism. Increasingly, Indian Muslim youth are talking about the plights of fellow Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, and neighboring Pakistan. Indian blogospheres and social networking websites are full of these instances. India's leading radical Muslim youth movement and increasing source of concern is the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and its off shoot, Indian Mujahedeen.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- In India, the drive to implement *shari'a* has never been as intense as in Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, a sense of insecurity has long gripped India's Muslims. Future policy should monitor and address this perception of marginalization.
- A small section of India's Muslims—homegrown jihadists—has taken to terrorism and has acquired international links in recent times. Terrorism among Indian Muslims appears to have originated following the Babri mosque demolition in 1992. Since then, the potential for homegrown terrorism has grown extensively throughout the country.
- The changing Islamic political landscape in neighboring Bangladesh and Pakistan, where terrorist outfits have political parties with overt ties to transnational movements and networks, and the resurgent Islamic violence in the region will likely dictate the future trajectories of transnational Islam in India.

> Islam in India unfolds a bewildering diversity of Muslim communities and no statistical data can be framed to determine their location and assess the multiple streams of thoughts existing within them.[183]

This paper traces the emergence and growth of major transnational Islamic revivalist and militant movements and networks in India. While outlining their influence and geographical spread, the paper attempts to assess the degree of dialogue, interaction and confrontation occurring within and between these movements which have dominated India's Islamic landscape for over a century. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of their sphere of influence, the paper examines the flow of ideas, resources and, most importantly, future trajectory of these movements and how they are shaped by contemporary circumstances inside India.

In particular, the paper addresses some specific questions about the Islamic movements in India: What role do transnational Islamic movements play in a country where Muslims are a minority? Which movement is playing a dominant role in shaping the Islamic space? To what degree do these movements fuel inter- and intra-religious understandings and conflict in India? To what extent do these movements play a role towards building a unique Islamic identity in the country? How do regional and wider geopolitical events influence the growth or decline of Islamic movements in India? The above set of research questions addresses at least three concerns for policymakers about transnational Islam in its Indian context; the study thus: 1) locates the dominant and emerging Indian Islamic movements with transnational reach and influence; 2) provides a clear understanding of various transnational Islamic movements and networks, which are not always quietist, in the Indian setting; and 3) identifies the ideological and operational convergence of contemporary militant and activist Islam in India.

…this paper observes that not all movements in India are pietist or quietist, as movements like the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and Ahle Hadith are actively involved in subversive and sectarian activities.

This paper demonstrates how emphasis on orthodox Islamic practices and intra-religious rivalries between Indian Islamic movements play a significant role in jeopardizing efforts to build a Muslim "community of believers" as originally conceptualized by the Islamic movements and networks. Further, this paper observes that not all movements in India are pietist or quietist, as movements like the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and Ahle Hadith are actively involved in subversive and sectarian activities. Additionally, the paper explores the connections among both activist and militant strains of Islam in India, as well as the groups' relations with

[183] Mushirul Hasan, "Religion, Society and Politics during the Nehruvian Era: Profiling India's Muslim Communities," *Third Frame: Literature, Culture and Society* 1, no. 1 (2008): 95.

their foreign counterparts. Finally, the paper notes that these movements are not following a single trajectory at present, but future convergence is possible.

Following this introduction, the paper is divided into six sections. The first section defines and traces the emergence of transnational Islamic revival and reformist movements in India, while briefly assessing the current status of Muslims in the country. The following three sections focus on five major Indian Islamic movements and networks—the pietist Deoband, Tablighi Jamaat (TJ), and Ahle Hadith (AH); the Islamist Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and its Indian offshoot, the Jamaat-i-Islami Hind (JIH); and, finally, the militant Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)—paying special attention to their connections with contemporary circumstances. The fifth section discusses the various dimensions of the cooperation and confrontation occurring within and between these and other emerging movements (e.g., the Tablighi Jamaat vs. the Dawat-i-Islami) and shows how these Muslim actors interact and maneuver to dominate India's Islamic space. The sixth and concluding section highlights common traits shared by these groups, and summarizes the current state of affairs with regard to the Islamic movements and their future direction.

Transnational Islamic Movements and the Status of Muslims in India

Transnational Islam[184] in India has been the focus of intense intellectual debate since the late twentieth century due to its controversial links to "Islamic" terrorism and violence. The nineteenth century witnessed fundamental changes in Islamic thought worldwide, especially in Cairo, Tehran, Damascus and Istanbul. The shift was reflected in almost all aspects of the Islamic intellectual debate ranging from issues of identity, the state, tradition, jurisprudence, rituals and practices.[185] Precisely during that time, the seeds of many dominant Islamic reformist and revivalist movements were implanted on Indian soil and many of those movements have alleged influence on present-day Islamic militancy and grassroots activism the world over. Most of these Islamic movements have been influenced either by internal reform movements, e.g. anti-Sufi Wahhabi and Salafi movements,[186] or arose in the face of rising neo-Hindu and Bhakti (devotional) movements in India.

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184 Post-9/11 research has attempted to map the intricate anatomy of Islamic movements, which have largely aimed to spread and strengthen Islam by transcending political boundaries. In the context of Islam as a transnational religious practice, Bowen emphasizes three basic and characteristic phenomena: 1) demographic movement; 2) transnational Islamic institutions; and 3) Islamic reference and discourse crossing political boundaries. See John R. Bowen, "Beyond Migration: Islam as a Transnational Public Space," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 5 (2004): 879-894. While demographic movements do not necessarily trigger revivalist or reformist movements, the latter two trends seem to have contributed to the transnational communication of ideas and practices which in turn promotes transnational socio-religious movements. Scholars have argued that the process of globalization has been one of the prime motivators and fuelling factors for transnational social and religious movements.

But it is imperative to note that religious ideas and thoughts have transcended geographical and political boundaries since the emergence of religion and are not a new-age phenomenon as they are sometimes thought to be. Broadly, we may term this phenomenon as "transnationalism" which means socio-religious ties and interactions linking people or institutions through the continuous exchange of ideas, people and material, notwithstanding the presence of national borders. These "movements-sans-frontiers" invariably focus on the global interactions that occur during the course of engagement and not necessarily with single power centers, but with multiple hubs favoring local socio-political conditions.

185 For an excellent overview of these changes, see Basheer M. Nafi, "The Rise of Islamic Reformist Thought and its Challenge to Traditional Islam," in *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Suha Taji Farouki and Basheer M. Nafi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 28-60.

186 Peter B. Clarke, *New Religions in Global Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2006), 256.

The political and socio-religious setting of the nineteenth century forced Indian Muslims to shift their attention towards the Prophet Mohammed again, and away from the medieval Sufi[187] saints, shrines and Islamic clerics. To name some of the important Indian Islamic movements and networks, among others which will be studied below, there are the Deoband movement, Tablighi Jamaat, Ahle Hadith, and the Jamaat-i-Islami which, in due course, transcended the political boundaries of the subcontinent and manifested in both violent and pietistic forms at home and elsewhere. While many Islamic movements that arose from India remained local in influence, others have spread across the globe primarily through immigration, diaspora contacts, missionary activities and pilgrimage.

The key principle which drives many of these Islamic movements, except Sufi/shrine-centric mystic movements like the Suhrawardiya and Chistiyya, is supposedly the establishment of the imaginary *ummah* (community of believers) through either violent or other (e.g. conversion, proselytization) means. Many commonalities can be seen among these various movements in varying degrees on questions related to Muslim personal law, language (Urdu in South Asia), and sectarian and communal violence targeting Muslims.

Demographically a minority, the Muslim population in India feels rather safe and secure under India's constitution and largely supports the secular concept of the Indian state and India's composite culture.

Unlike other parts of the world where Islamic activism is intense, this activism is relatively moderate in India. Demographically a minority, the Muslim population in India feels rather safe and secure under India's constitution and largely supports the secular concept of the Indian state and India's composite culture. The overt drive to implement *shari'a* (Islamic law) has never been as intense in India as in neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh. Since independence, the Indian government has allowed its minority Muslim citizenry to follow *shari'a* in civil life and does not promote the majority Hindu religion and practices. However, despite this, the sense of minority insecurity[188] has gripped the Muslim community since the vivisection of the subcontinent after the departure of British and, perhaps, much before that.

Islamic revivalism appeared in the Indian subcontinent when Muslim power waned at the hands of the British colonial powers. Soon after, the ideas of Shah Walliyu'llah[189] and Shah Abdul Aziz gained ground and their ideas of an Islamic state galvanized Muslims into movements like

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187 At least 14 Sufi orders operated in India during the time of Mughal Emperor Akbar (d. 1605), but only four of them have survived into the 20th century: Firdawsiya, Suhrawardiya, Chistiyya and Zaydiya. The Sufi decline came when the Sufis came under severe attacks from orthodox Muslims and Islamic clerics in the absence of monarchial patronage to mystic or popular pietistic Islam. See Gopal Krishna, "Piety and Politics in Indian Islam," in *Muslim Communities of South Asia: Culture, Society and Power*, ed. T.N. Madan (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 331-364.

188 Even though Muslims feel secure in India, their confidence has been largely shaken by the rise of right-wing Hindus and militant groups who have challenged Indian Muslims' "loyalty" to the land, questioning their true allegiance, and increasing communal violence targeting the Indian Muslim community.

189 G.N. Jalbani, *Teachings of Shah Waliyullah of Delhi* (Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1967). Also see M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967).

the Tehrik-i-Mujahidin.[190] Walliyu'llah believed in the innate perfection of the *shari'a* and was much more inclined to advocate the total enforcement of the *shari'a* and large-scale Islamization of the Indian population. In the political domain, his primary concern was to restore Muslim dominance in the governance of India. To that effect, Walliyu'llah outlined a three-point program: 1) Muslims must rely on military force to overcome their political adversaries; 2) Muslim society in India must be restructured in accordance with the early Islamic ideals; and 3) the Muslims of the subcontinent must explore the possibility of inviting Muslim intervention from outside to achieve the first two objectives.

Arguably, Waliyu'llah's idea set in motion a new trend in Indian Islam and inspired the cult of militant and reformist Islam in the country while paving the way for numerous local and transnational Islamic movements.[191] The most prominent Waliyu'llah-inspired movements in India are discussed below under three broad categories: 1) Pietist movements (e.g., Deoband school, Tablighi Jamaat, and Ahle Hadith); 2) Islamist ideology based (Jamaat-i-Islami-Hind); and militant networks (e.g., the Students Islamic Movement of India).

Indian Pietist[192] Movements: Deoband, Tablighi Jamaat, and Ahle Hadith

The Deoband Movement in India

Nearly after a decade of events following 1857, and coinciding with the downfall of the Mughal Empire and the advent of British colonial rule in India, the followers of Waliyu'llah and Sayyid Ahmad resurfaced in an organized way, with the foundation of the Darul Uloom (abode of learning) madrassa in Deoband, north India, in 1866. The perceived large-scale moral and spiritual degeneration among Muslims paved the way for the establishment of this institution. The Darul Uloom was established by two Islamic teachers—Muhammad Qasim Nanaotawi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi—primarily to rectify the perceived lack of religious education among the Muslims of British India.

While the Aligarh school led by Syed Ahmed Khan[193] rejected the Islamic state concept and accepted the community status for the Muslims in India, the Deoband school (the direct and legitimate offshoot of the Waliyu'llah school) comprised its nation-state theme with that of the community, by observing the example of the Caliphate in Turkey as its political guide. The Walliyu'llah tradition has been carried forward by the Deoband and other groups which were

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190 During the Tehrik period, Muslims under Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly, declared armed struggle (jihad or holy war) against the Sikh community with the hope to regain power and the indirect objective of throwing the British out of the subcontinent in order to establish an Islamic nation-state. However, the zeal died down for two reasons: difference of opinion among clerics with regards to the Waliyu'llahi concept of the nation-state and the defeat of the mujahidin at Balakot (now in Pakistan) in 1831. For further details, see Anwar Moazzam, "The Indian Muslim: A Dilemma of Dual Personality," in *India and Contemporary Islam: Proceedings of a Seminar*, ed. S.T. Lokhandwalla (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1971).

191 M.S. Agwani, *Islamic Fundamentalism in India* (Chandigarh: Twenty First Century Indian Society, 1986), 10-11.

192 The term "pietist," as used in this paper derives from the piety that forms part of the basic essentials of Islam, calling for the strict observance of the divine commandments. This piety also calls Muslims to shun all forbidden, evil and reprehensible things. Largely, Muslim religiosity has been derived from the Quranic text and the life of the Prophet, who has been the role model of piety for all Muslims. This piety has manifested in two broad forms: orthodox and mystical. While mystical piety emphasizes love for God and spiritual Islam, orthodox piety stresses the strict observance of Islamic religious duties and traditional practices inherited from the past. The Deoband, Tablighi Jamaat and Ahle Hadith movements fall under this broad category.

193 Sir Syed Ahmed Khan founded the Anglo-Muhammadan College in Aligarh, whose curriculum sought to give Indian Muslims both Western scientific and Islamic learning, unlike Deoband.

espousing both religious reform and Islamic militancy at that time. However, many liberal Islamic scholars rejected and vehemently resisted the Deoband's tendencies to look towards other Muslim nations for guidance and questioned the right of Turkish sultans to claim religious authority over the Muslims of the world.

Originally intended to be a reformist movement, Darul Uloom Deoband became the most vital institution for Islamic learning in India and largely emphasized individual spiritual discipline, but opposed any veneration of saints, even though the movement was rooted in the tradition of some Sufi orders. The Deoband's influence spread far and wide in due course and became more pervasive than any other contemporary Islamic movement. The first hundred years of Darul Uloom witnessed large numbers of Islamic graduates coming to India from places like Myanmar, Afghanistan, Central Asia, China and Malaysia.[194] The *dawat o tabligh* (preaching and propagation) wing of Darul Uloom Deoband, which has been most active in post-independence India, was initiated against the rise of the Hindu *Shuddhi* movement which was aimed at the conversion of Indian Muslims to Hinduism.[195]

Arguably, the Deoband's influence spread due to two of its inspired offshoots, Tablighi Jamaat (TJ, though an independent movement, it has motives similar to the Deoband's *dawat o tabligh* wing) and the Jamiatul Ulema-i Hind (JUIH, Association of Indian Ulema).[196] The Deoband movement was not overtly apolitical even though it strictly adhered to the principle of keeping politics at bay. It had supported the Khilafat (Caliphate) Movement[197] during World War I and the freedom movement in India (prior to 1947). The Deoband's activist stance was evident from its goal for freedom from foreign rule and preservation of the Muslim faith and its historical institution.[198] Retaining its semi-apolitical character in post-independence India, the Deoband school has largely refrained from active political participation while working for Muslim identity and interests in the country.

While its offshoot, TJ, is an apolitical group reaching almost every corner of the globe (discussed below), JUIH actively participated in Indian politics following the Khilafat episode of the 1920s. Jamiatul Ulema-i Hind has entered into *mu'ahadah* (or mutual contract) with non-Muslims to establish and support a secular political and social environment in India.[199] The JUIH has been part of the Indian political landscape since 1920s. As a religious organization, it was closely associated with the Muslim League with the demand for partition and then with the Congress Party and some contemporary regional political groupings. With its nationwide network, besides reaching the Indian parliament, the JUIH has been involved in charity, minority educational reforms, and continues to fight for the rights of Indian Muslims.

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194 For a number of graduates between 1866 and 1962, see Syed Mehbub Rizvi, *Tarikh-i Deoband* (Deoband: Ilmi-Marqaz, 1972), 370-71.

195 In the early 1920s, the *ulema* of Deoband had diverted attention to the *Shuddhi* movement of the Arya Samaj through which about 18,000 Malkana Muslim Rajputs had been reconverted to Hinduism. Later different methods, including coercion, were used to reconvert them into the Islamic fold, mainly through Islamic preachers or Tablighs, thus starting *tabligh* (proselytization) and *tanzeem* movements. Both Hindu and Muslim organizations were criticized for their involvement in active proselytization, which very often led to violence, and for their lack of focus on the ongoing freedom struggle.

196 Barbara D. Metcalf classified these movements as "Deoband movements" and discussed at length how they were different from other Islamic movements in the contemporary Muslim world. See Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

197 The Khilafat (Caliphate) Movement was launched by Muslims in the subcontinent in the aftermath of World War I to influence the colonial British regime and aimed at protecting the Ottoman Empire.

198 M. Azam Qasmi, "Sufism and the Founders of Deoband," in *The Islamic Path: Sufism, Society and Politics in India*, ed. Saiyid Zaheer Hussain Jafri and Helmut Reifeld (New Delhi: Rainbow Publishers, 2006), 354-356.

199 The *mu'ahada* concept has its origin in the early years of Islamic history when the Prophet Muhammed devised a civic contract between Muslim groups and the large Jewish community in the city of Medina. Noted in Ziya-ul Hasan Faruqi, "Indian Muslims and the Ideology of the Secular State," in *South Asian Politics and Religion*, ed. Donald Eugene Smith (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 140.

The Deoband's tryst with modernity is reflected in its adoption of print and information technology to reach out to a global audience and readership. The *ulema* of the Deoband use the print media to impart Islamic knowledge to a wider readership beyond the seminary. The advent of information technology and the spread of the Internet provided the Deoband a platform to publicize its activities in at least four languages (English, Urdu, Hindi and Arabic), and even issue *fatwas* (Islamic legal opinions) online in two languages (Urdu and English). The Deoband also publishes a monthly Arabic magazine, *Al-Daie*, which is available online for audiences outside South Asia, particularly targeting the Arab world. Even though it adopted information technology to propagate Islam, in 2004 Darul Uloom issued a *fatwa* against watching television, including Islamic channels, perhaps perceiving itself as threatened by individual Islamic (lay) preachers who used the television as a conduit to reach out to the masses.

The Deoband school openly criticizes all forms of violence including terrorism, but ambiguously supports the "freedom struggles" of Muslims worldwide. In early 2008, the Darul Uloom, along with the Jamiat and other Islamic institutions, issued a *fatwa* denouncing all forms of terrorism in the country. By adhering to this principle, the Deoband also criticizes the United States, Israel, Russia, China and other countries where Muslims are subjected to perceived injustices.

The Tablighi Jamaat in India

With the demise of the Khilafat Movement, there arose another transnational Islamic revivalist movement, known as Tablighi Jamaat (also known as Jamaat Tablighi which literaly means Preaching Society). Tablighi Jamaat grew from a movement to purify the Meo tribes of Mewat during the communal competition in early twentieth century India to become the most widely followed movement in the Muslim world. Basically a missionary, activist oriented informal grouping, TJ aims to teach Muslims "how to become true Muslims" (*Oh Musalman, Musalman Bano*!). Tablighi Jamaat was started by Deoband alumnus Maulana Muhammed Ilyas. Ilyas was influenced both by his Deobandi training, and Sayyid Ahmed of Rai Barely's concept of jihad[200] which had been directed against the Sikh community in then Punjab.[201]

Practically, TJ shares the same ideology as the Deoband and the former has been instrumental in the spread of Deobandism by hiding its true orientations and evading sectarian controversies. For TJ and also for other Islamic revivalist movements, the modern world is in a state of ignorance and the movement tries to bring about a change by infusing its followers with Islamic values and practices. The TJ movement is essentially conservative in outlook and orientation, with a strong aversion to rational sciences.

According to Jorgen Nielsen, TJ acts as the "active pietism of the Deoband movement"[202] with TJ providing the foot soldiers (e.g., missionaries) and the Deoband providing the mosques. However, "TJ is fundamentalist with a difference," as one author described the movement, especially due to Ilyas's gradual divergence from the jihadist path and aloofness from politics[203] during the initial

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200 Sayyid Ahmed waged jihad against "infidels" or "non-believers" (e.g. Sikhs and the British). For a detailed account, see Freeland Abbott, "The Jihad of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid," *The Muslim World* 52, no. 3 (1962): 216-222.

201 Maulana Muhammed Ilyas's preaching campaign was described as *tehrik* (movement), *tanzeem* (organization) and, more commonly, *jamaat* (party). Ilyas himself called it a *tehrik-i-iman* (faith movement). See M. Anwarul Haq, *The Faith Movement of Mawlana Muhammed Ilyas* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972).

202 Jorgen S. Nielsen, *Muslims in Western Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 132-33.

203 The widely accepted view on the apolitical nature of TJ has been challenged by many scholars. For example, Marc Gaborieau points out that, both in Pakistan and Bangladesh, TJ has an interface with the political establishment. He further argues that TJ first builds individuals and institutions, which over time may exert a more lasting political influence." Marc Gaborieau, "Transnational Islamic Movements: Tablighi Jama'at in Politics?" *ISIM Newsletter* 3 (1999). Also see, Yoginder Sikand, "The Tablighi Jama'at and Politics," *ISIM Newsletter* 13 (2003).

years of the movement's formation.[204] In his work, Yoginder Sikand points out that TJ was not just about improving the Islamic consciousness of common Muslims but grew into a project of the construction of a pan-Indian Muslim community identity.

Tablighi Jamaat, since its emergence perhaps, has never been involved in or promoted violence in any form. Instead, the prime concern of TJ has been the moral reform of individual Muslims and sometimes non-Muslims. With its headquarters in New Delhi, TJ has managed to influence Indian Muslims irrespective of geographical locations and, often, it has had to compete with other Islamic movements and ideologies. Tablighi Jamaat faces criticism from within the movement as well for not conforming completely to the Quran or Hadith and for empowering youths without any substantive knowledge of Islam to preach.

However, the success of TJ as a broad-based grassroots movement can be gauged from the fact that it conducts a very systematic method for *da'wa* (literally, inviting) activities in India as elsewhere. Every day at least one hundred preaching parties—comprising 10 to 12 members each—travel to different parts of the country. These parties also travel overseas every week.[205] The usual duration of a Jamaat tour varies from three to 40 days. During tours, Tablighis (members of the Tablighi Jamaat) stay overnight in mosques and go door-to-door urging people to come for prayers and listen to *bayan* (sermons). It is perhaps TJ's openness to embrace all Muslims irrespective of their social status that makes it the most followed movement in contemporary India.

The only TJ training manual is the *Tablighi Nisab*, later known as *Fazail-e-Amal* (or "the virtues of actions and worship"). Another major TJ publication is *Hayat as Sahabha* written in Arabic by Muhaamed Yousuf.

Tablighi Jamaat in India (as elsewhere) never publicizes its agenda of conclaves in the media, nor does it make public any details of conclave participants. Tablighi Jamaat primarily relies on oral communication in spreading its messages. This secretive organizational approach and lack of control on the movement's followers[206] draws widespread criticism from the Muslim community and government agencies.

At regular intervals, TJ organizes regional, national and international conclaves or congregations (*ijtemas)*[207] in different parts of India, mostly in rural or small townships. In 2006, a two-day regional meeting was held at Warangode in Kerala where hundreds of followers gathered. Again that year in November, a three-day long international congregation was held on the outskirts of Bhopal in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. It was reported that "Jamaats" from 58 countries participated in the Bhopal assembly.[208] Late last year (2007), a similar TJ conclave was held at Saraimeer, Uttar Pradesh, that witnessed tens of thousands of Muslims from across the world gathered in this small town. [209]

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204 M. S. Agwani, *Islamic Fundamentalism in India*, 49-50.

205 "Tabligh, or the enigma of revival," *Times of India*, July 22, 2007.

206 Tablighi Jamaat has recently initiated background and identity check procedures for any prospective new member in India. The author's interaction with some Tablighis in Delhi reveals that the organization does not bother to dictate to their followers what to do for a living. Tablighi Jamaat embraces people from all walks of life.

207 International Tabligh *ijtemas*, considered to be the second largest congregation of Muslims after the Mecca (Hajj) congregation, are now a symbol of the unity of all Muslims, an opportunity to demonstrate their mutual solidarity, love and respect and to reiterate their commitment to the Islamic values of discipline, brotherhood and magnanimity. Ijtema is the largest congregation of Muslims next to the Hajj.

208 E.g., Iran, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Africa, Canada, US, UK, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, etc. "Global 'Tablighi Ijtema' concludes in Bhopal seeking blessings for world peace," *The Indian Muslims*, November 26, 2006.

209 Saraimeer's opulence mostly comes from Gulf remittance (mostly from Saudi Arabia and UAE); the township is home to increasing Islamic activism and has been in the news for all the wrong reasons recently. Author's interactions with local Muslims in Saraimeer (Azamgarh, UP) in September, 2008. Saraimeer was dubbed "little Dubai," and is also called the "terror city" of India.

In the global arena, TJ has consolidated its foothold since 1947. Muhammad Yusuf, Ilyas's son and successor, had been credited with the transnationalisation of TJ. Yusuf consolidated the movement in South Asia following the vivisection of the subcontinent, ignoring the Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh borders. Then TJ was introduced in the Arab countries after 1948; in Western countries after 1950; in the Afro-Asian countries after 1956; and, recently, in China and Central Asia.[210] Tablighi Jamaat began a worldwide program starting from the 1960s, with the spread of immigrant populations to America and Europe[211] and Southeast Asia.[212] Both American and UK based TJ wings have maintained close working relations with the movement's Indian headquarters.

The presence of a large South Asian Muslim population in the US and the establishment of the Al Falah Mosque at Corona, TJ headquarters with branches in Los Angeles and San Diego, facilitated the group's cause to a larger extent in the West.[213] Earlier, TJ operated out of a Bangladeshi mosque located in Manhattan. Like elsewhere, Tablighs in the US are committed to active *da'wa* among Muslims and non-Muslims. At Corona, the sermon is usually in English and in Arabic and sometimes in Urdu to cater to South Asian Tablighis. The board of management is largely dominated by Indians, especially Muslims from Gujarat, Pakistanis and a few of Bangladeshi origin. The Gujarati Muslims too are dominating the TJ scene in Dewsbury, UK.

However, as a result of the total isolationism of TJ followers (who are sometimes accused of being obscurantists)[214] and their staunch practices within the host societies, TJ has made little impact in the US in comparison to Canada and the UK, especially among the immigrants and lower social classes.

The Tablighi Jamaat's Alleged Links to Terrorism

Like the Deoband's influence over the Taliban militia in Afghanistan, allegations about TJ's ties to terrorism surfaced when many Guantanamo Bay detainees were found to have association with the TJ movement. Closer to home, the Islamic militants outfits Harkat ul Jihad Islami (HuJI) and Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) are believed to have TJ influence. The criticism and suspicion TJ has raised in the last couple of decades cannot be totally ignored. The US intelligence agencies probing terrorist incidents (such as those of shoe-bomber Richard Reid, Jose Padilla and John Lindh) and networks noted that TJ has become radicalized and perhaps used for a safe cover for individual terrorists or groups including members of al Qaeda.[215]

There are a couple of similar cases that have emerged in India recently, though not proven conclusively. Immediately after the July 2006 Mumbai commuter train blasts, counter-terrorism

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210 Shail Mayaram, "Hindu and Islamic Transnational Religious Movements," *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 3, 2004, 82.

211 Tablighi Jamaat activities expanded rapidly under Maulana Yusuf both in the subcontinent and abroad. The acceptance could be gauged by the attendance of followers in TJ's annual congregations held in Raiwind (Pakistan), Tungi (Bangladesh), or in Bhopal (India). See Barbara D. Metcalf, "Travelers' Tales in the Tablighi Jama'at," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588, no. 1 (2003): 136-148.

212 See Alexander Horstmann, "The Tablighi Jama'at, Transnational Islam, and the Transformation of the Self between Southern Thailand and South Asia," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 1 (2007): 26-40.

213 Tablighi Jamaat is known in the US and Canada for organizing large gatherings. In 1988 TJ's Chicago convention drew more than 6,000 people and, in Toronto, it drew not less than 4,000 people in 1997. See Amina Mohammad-Arif, Salam America: *South Asian Muslims in New York* (London: Anthem Press, 2002).

214 Ibid., 182-184.

215 For TJ's alleged ties with jihad and terrorism, see, for example, Alex Alexiev, "Tablighi Jamaat: Jihad's Stealthy Legions," *Middle East Quarterly* XII, no. 1 (Winter 2005). Also see Daniel Friedman, "Tablighi Jamaat Dossier," *Center for Policing Terrorism* (May 12, 2005). The author cautioned in the dossier that TJ is "neither harmless nor malign."

investigators tracked a group of TJ activists in the northeastern state of Tripura[216] and interrogated them for any clues or ties with Islamic militants across the border, in Bangladesh. The Tabligis were originally from Maharashtra in western India. The security agencies tried to find out why they had been staying in the village close to the international border and coming from such a far flung state. In the aftermath, security forces deployed in the northeastern part of the country confirmed that many Islamic militants and criminals are active in that part of the country. These militants operate in the guise of TJ activists and travel frequently across the border to Nepal and Bangladesh, as it is always easy to get travel permits when in a preaching group. However, the question remains unanswered if those detained were real Tablighis or undercover militants, and also if TJ has ever facilitated these "'terror travels" or missions across the border. With its stature as a "movement-sans-frontiers," there is every chance that, unknowingly, TJ might have helped to procure travel documents for real militant elements.

There is no doubt that Islamic militants do participate in the Tabligh's activities, perhaps for learning or imbibing Islamic ethos and practices. However, examples of leaflets circulated by the terrorist group Al-Salafiyah al-Jihadiyah, Morocco, would be best suited here to substantiate the doubt. Moroccan authorities have said on record that al-Jihadiyah urged their members to join Islamic organizations such TJ, in order "to hide their identity."[217] Counter-terror investigations in India and Pakistan show in the recent past the militants' proximity to the movement. Following the arrest of Indian-born terror suspects Kafeel and Sabeel Ahmed[218] in the failed terror plots in the United Kingdom in July 2007, Syed Anzar Shah Qasmy, a senior member of TJ and a priest at the Masjid-e-Noorani, Bangalore, carefully admitted to their alleged TJ linkage and influence. According to Qasmy, since TJ followers are asked to give up material things and serve Allah, they can be attracted to (militant) ideologies peddled in the name of Allah. He further added that, "Youngsters following the Tablighi Jamaat are vulnerable to any outside influence spread in the name of Allah, may it be terrorism or anything else."[219]

The Ahle Hadith in India

Similar to the Tablighi Jamaat, the Ahle Hadith (AH, also Ahle Hadees) has been influential in the subcontinent with active ties with Saudi Wahhabis and strong diaspora links. Literally meaning the "People of the Tradition of the Prophet," AH is called *ghair muqallid* (non-conformist) by rival Islamic movements, mostly due to the movement's non-conformism to any of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali) or the commentaries and legal opinions based on them.

Ahle Hadith, which challenged the customary Indian Islamic ethos and associated practices, was founded by Sayyid Nazir, who belonged to a family of judges who practiced at the Mughal court.

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216 "Islamic preachers in India's northeast questioned over role in train bombings," *Khaleej Times*, July 18, 2006, www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/subcontinent/2006/July/subcontinent_July639.xml&section=subcontinent&col.

217 Alexiev, "Tablighi Jamaat."

218 "Glasgow terror plot: Sabeel, Kafeel members of fundamentalist sect," *Indo Asian News Service*, July 6, 2007.

219 "Why Tabligh men answer terror call," *Daily News and Analysis*, July 10, 2007. Of late, TJ has come under scathing attacks from Hindu hardliners in India for their alleged links with terrorism in the country which has forced the movement as a whole to introduce some organizational reforms, e.g., background checks of new activists. This is coupled with media highlights of TJ's influence over Muslim youths in the Western world and the movement's suspected links with terror masterminds in India. Following the Godhra train burning in 2002, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, along with other right-wing organizations, called for public discussion on Islamic *madrassas*, and TJ's and Darul Uloom Deoband's activities. They also demanded the proscription of five Muslim organizations including the Students Islamic Movement of India, Jamaat-i-Islami Hind and the TJ for their suspected involvement in anti-India activities. However, these claims have been refuted by Muslim bodies and TJ followers.

Most of AH's followers came from the higher strata of society in the initial years of its formation.[220] Although not as widespread in India as TJ, this revivalist group grew as a major Islamic movement in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Middle Eastern countries over the years. Ahle Hadith had its origins in early nineteenth century north India. The movement has inspired personalities like Sayyid Ahmed, the pioneer of the Barelvi movement. The founders of AH insisted that Muslims must go back to the original sources of their faith, the Quran and the Hadith. Largely, members of AH launched the movement for reviving Islam on the basis of its fundamental principles.[221]

The Jamiat Ahle Hadith Hind, though founded in 1906, regained stature as a major Islamic movement in the 1950s under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Ahab Arvin. The Jamiat was founded with a view to propagate the Islamic message and to motivate Muslims to adhere to the "pristine" monotheism (*tawhid*).[222] Presently, it has branches in almost 20 states in India with its headquarters in the walled city of Delhi.[223]

Ahle Hadith propagates openly the doctrine of jihad in India, however, under special circumstances. According to AH, jihad can be invoked when and where the Islamic community is facing hardships and tyranny.

In southern India, AH inspired among others, the Mujahid Students Movement (MSM) in the state of Kerala in the early 1970s which emerged as a student wing of the Kerala Nadvathul Mujahedeen (KNM), the Salafi group active in Kerala with Gulf ties. Initially a part of the Ittihad Subbanul Mujahedeen (ISM), the youth wing of KNM, MSM engages in Islamic *da'wa* and propagates Islamic ideals and principles among the student community in Kerala and facilitates deliberations on Islam.[224] It also has branches in Gulf countries along with Indian *Islahi* centers in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait. Recently, Indian *Islahi* centers have been established in other large cities in India.

This movement is presently active and widespread in Pakistan through nearly 17 affiliated organizations, including the Markazi Jami'at Ahle Hadith (est. 1948). The Markazi even has a center in Small Heath, Birmingham (UK) with mass followings and a branch in India. Ahle Hadith is not apolitical and many of the followers of this movement have actively participated in politics and aim to restore the Caliphate. With a massive presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan, many AH groups are involved in the Kashmir armed struggle and are affiliated with Kashmir-centric militant outfits such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Harkat-ul Mujahedeen.

The Indian Ahle Hadith has been under the influence of the Saudi Salafi movement and petrodollars have evidently played a significant role in changing the followers so much that many of them prefer to call themselves Salafis, rather than Ahle Hadith in order to stress their closeness with the Saudis. The early AH was evidently a progressive movement in many ways. But presently, partly due to the Saudi connection, sections of the movement are growing increasingly reactionary, raising minor issues of differences with other Muslim sects (e.g., TJ and Barelvis) in order to condemn them.

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220 See, Peter B. Clarke, New Religions in Global Perspective (London: Routledge, 2006), 259.

221 Yoginder Sikand, "Stoking the Flames: Intra-Muslim Rivalries in India and the Saudi Connection," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 1 (2007): 95-108.

222 Tawhid acknowledges the unity of God. It is all-inclusive, implying that nothing exists outside of God. This term originated from the word *wahhada*, meaning to make, declare or acknowledge oneness.

223 Author's interaction with AH scholars in Delhi and Kolkata in July 2008. For more information on its activities, visit the official website of Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadith Hind, www.ahlehadees.org.

224 Mammoth Mujahid conference in Kerala, *The Milli Gazette, January* 16-31, 2004. For details of this AH inspired movement and Gulf-wide network, see the official website of the Mujahid Students Movement, www.msmkerala.org.

Ahle Hadith has been blamed for the growing intra-Muslim sectarian strife in India in recent years.[225] It is observed that AH has been instrumental in fuelling intra-Muslim rivalries and reinforcing negative stereotypes about non-Muslims. Ahle Hadith even issues directives to its followers to stop visiting Sufi shrines, not to use amulets and even not to listen to Sufi music. Ahle Hadith has been producing literature targeting other Muslim sects too. The funds for these activities are evidently coming from their Saudi patrons. As a result of the increasing divides within AH and for its sectarian tendencies, the real problems of the community—education, communalism, poverty and so on—are being sidelined as they fight over petty issues of ritual or doctrinal differences.[226]

The AH seat of power, Ahle Hadis Jami'a Salafia of Benares, has been under intelligence monitoring for receiving funds from Saudi charities (e.g. Al Rashid Trust) which has also been generous to the Markaz-ul Dawa al-Irshad, Lashkar-e-Toiba's parent body in Pakistan. Investigations into the recent terror attacks in Gujarat and Rajasthan revealed that religious groups like AH and TJ have virtually filled the crammed *bastis* (ghettos) providing basic amenities to woo Muslims to their religious discourses regularly. One estimate shows that about 200 *madrassas* have cropped up in the Shah-e-Alam area of Ahmadabad alone since 2002.[227] And many AH and TJ followers have turned to the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI, discussed below) and are suspected to be involved in the newly emerged Indian Mujahedeen outfit with the sole aim of "Indianizing" the Islamic militancy in the country.

It is observed that Ahle Hadith has been instrumental in fuelling intra-Muslim rivalries and reinforcing negative stereotypes about non-Muslims.

Islamist Ideology: The Jamaat-i-Islami and Jamaat-i-Islami Hind

In contrast to TJ and other pietistic movements, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), originally based on a political Islamist ideology, emerged in the last decade of British rule in India. In contrast to all previous Islamic movements in India, JI was the first organized political Islamic reformist movement, and came into existence in August 1941 in Lahore under the leadership of Syed Abul Ala Maududi.[228] Maududi formed JI as an alternative to both the leading political parties of that time, the Congress Party and the Muslim League, envisioning the supreme purpose of Islam to establish the sovereignty of God on earth or an Islamic state. He argued that the principles and modalities for setting up God's government on earth were spelt out in the Quran and the Hadith.

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225 Yoginder Sikand, *Muslims in India: Contemporary Social and Political Discourses* (New Delhi: Hope India, 2006), 142-143.

226 See Arshad Amanullah, "Madrassa Reforms in India," *The South Asian*, January 06, 2005, www.thesouthasian.org/archives/2005/madrassa_reforms_in_india.html. Amanullah is an alumnus of the Jami'a Salafia, Benares, Uttar Pradesh, the apex madrassa of the Ahle Hadith in India.

227 "Radicals woo Ahmadabad's invisible people," *Daily News and Analysis*, September 10, 2008.

228 Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "Mawdudi and Jama'at-i Islami: The Origins, Theory and Practice of Islamic Revivalism," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, ed. Ali Rahnema (London: Zed Books, 1994), 98-122.

In contrast to TJ's apolitical character, JI propounded Islamic theocracy and gradually became influential in many Muslim countries, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, in West Asia and also in many Southeast Asian countries. One leading scholar has categorized JI with other contemporary Islamic movements (e.g., Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen, or the Muslim Brotherhood, in Egypt; the Fazeelat Party in Turkey; and the Masyumi Party in Indonesia) as integrationist,[229] in other words, as seeking to establish an Islamic state through participation in the constitutional political processes.

After the vivisection of the subcontinent, JI responded to the new realities by splitting into two independent organizations. In April 1948, at a meeting in Allahabad, the Jamaat-i-Islami Hind (JIH) was formed with Maulana Abullais Nadwi as its *ameer* (president). The workers of the Jamaat-i-Islami in Jammu & Kashmir chose to remain as an independent organization called Jammu & Kashmir Jamaat-i-Islami.[230] The Indian branch developed its own philosophy in light of the minority status of the Muslim population in a secular socio-political condition. The JIH projects Islam as a practical doctrine and program above all religious practices. Initially JIH focused on the rights of the Muslim community in the country. In due course it encouraged social, spiritual reform and charity among Muslims and abandoned the goal of forming an Islamic state. The Jamaat's original objective to establish "Allah's government" (*hukumat-e-ilahiya*) was replaced with the concept of the establishment of society in conformity with the *shari'a* (*iqamat-e-deen*), although scholars believe that the replacement was more terminological than substantive-ideological.[231]

However, JIH spearheaded the fight for Muslim identity in India whereas its sister organizations in Pakistan and Bangladesh retained their political ambition and continued to work on that path until recently. While JIH supports secularism, its Pakistani counterpart labels secularism as an "unmitigated evil" and as the worst enemy of Islam. In sharp contrast, the J&K Jamaat's stand is quite on the line of the Pakistani Jamaat's agenda as it goes on denouncing Indian authority over the state and is presently part of the separatist Huriyat Conference and quite subdued as an independent movement. The J&K wing had tried its hand in politics, forming an alliance with the Muslim United Front to achieve poll success. Failure in that effort gave birth to the most lethal and highly organized militant outfit in Kashmir, Hizbul Mujahideen. The J&K wing of the Jamaat largely believes in Islam-inspired political mobilization and advocates the establishment of Nizam-e-Mustafa in accordance with Maududi's idea.[232]

The impact of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was quite visible on both JIH and J&K Jamaats when their respective student wings (SIMI and Jamaat-i-Tulaba of Kashmir) called for an Iranian type Islamic revolution in India. However, their efforts were thwarted by the swift government action.[233] Overwhelmed by the success of the Iranian revolution, the Indian Jamaat supported another Islamic icon in neighboring Pakistan. Jamaat-i-Islami Hind was supportive of Zia ul-Haq's agenda of establishing God's rule in Pakistan and overtly critical of pro-democratic forces

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229 Kamran Asghar Bokhari, "Jihad & Jihadism: A Rendition of Transnational Militant Non-State Actors" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 04, 2004).

230 Until 1952, the J & K Jamaat was under the Jamaat-i-Islami Hind. But, due to the disputed status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, JIH decided to separate the Kashmir wing as an independent body. For further details, see Yoginder Sikand, "The Emergence and Development of the Jama'at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (1940s-1990)," *Modern Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2002): 723.

231 Noted in Irfan Ahmad, "Between moderation and radicalization: transnational interactions of Jamaat-e-Islami of India," *Global Networks* 5, no. 3 (2005): 284.

232 Jagmohan Malhotra, *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2006), 177.

233 The Indian government reportedly sent back foreign delegates including dignitaries immediately after they landed at the airport. The government also deployed the army during the Jamaat's 1982 popular movements in J&K.

including Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's family members in that country. As per JIH, Zia was working not only for Pakistan's stability, but for the unity of the Muslim world.[234]

Gradually, JIH structured itself like the Hindu right-wing organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and refrained from direct political participation, but continued to work closely with secular and other regional Islamic political parties like the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen. It became the key interventionist force in India to fight for Muslim identity. More or less, it followed a relatively flexible Maududi model to suit Indian conditions. At present, JIH has become the main platform for Indian Muslims to air grievances. The Indian *Mujahedeen* email manifestos shed some light on its objectives: to spread Islam in India, to wage jihad against the "infidels" and to establish "God's government" according to Quranic tenets.[235]

Jamaat-i-Islami Hind now has countrywide units with over 6,000 members undertaking a two-pronged program: 1) dispelling the doubts and misgivings about Islam that exist in the minds of non-Muslims, and 2) refining the Muslims as a community. Jamaat-i-Islami Hind has active women and girls units and a student organization, the Students Islamic Organization (SIO). Students Islamic Organization members have participated in conventions organized by the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and the student body has a well established network operating in the global sphere. Evidently, JIH's influence has reached Iran and other Middle Eastern countries, especially Saudi Arabia, in due course of time.

In the 1970s, JIH had reportedly developed close links with the Gulf countries when thousands of Indian Muslims migrated to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries for livelihood, mostly in the field of construction. The contribution of Mohammad Yusuf, the *ameer* of JIH in the 1970s, to build strong ties with Saudi Arabia is well documented. Jamaat-i-Islami Hind's transnational reach and influence came to light during the movement's Hyderabad convention in 1981 where Islamic activists from Saudi Arabia,[236] Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates attended the convention.

Beyond the Gulf countries, JI successfully influenced immigrant Muslims in the US to establish the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) in the 1960s. The main objective behind the formation of ICNA was to teach and guide Muslims to live according to Islam. Even today South Asians (including Indian Muslims) are still a majority in ICNA with Urdu as the main language for debate and communication.[237] It is well established now that JIH and other regional Jamaats (Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal) get financial support from ICNA, Muslim Aid and the Islamic Foundation (UK) to carry out their activities in their respective countries. The symbiotic relationship among the various Jamaats in South Asia can be ascertained from the Pakistani Jamaat's clearly laid out facts about its ties with other regional Jamaats including JIH extending full moral and material support for their cause.

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234 Noted in M.S. Agwani, *Islamic Fundamentalism in India*, 96-97.

235 For a detail analysis on IM as homegrown Jihadi outfit, See, Animesh Roul, "India's Home-Grown Jihadi Threat: A Profile of the Indian Mujahedeen," *Terrorism Monitor* 7, no. 4 (March 3, 2009).

236 For a detailed account on the JIH operation in Saudi Arabia, how its circle of members in the Gulf countries functioned directly under the supervision of the JIH headquarters in New Delhi, and how they secretly congregate and disperse during special dinners, see, Irfan Ahmed, "Between moderation and radicalization," 279-299.

237 Amina Mohammad-Arif, *Salam America*, 170-172.

Militant Islamic Networks in India: The Case of the Students Islamic Movement of India

Islamic principles are always important for militant Islamists who believe that these should be followed as a guide for all walks of life. The militants used to call for an Islamic state with the strict applications of *shari'a* and sometimes follow the path of violence to safeguard their utopian space. In India, the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), the JIH's erstwhile student wing, can be identified as a militant Islamic movement with transregional reach and influence.

Students Islamic Movement of India was founded in 1977 at the University of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, as a radical student outfit. The interlinked triad of the *ummah*, caliphate and jihad determined SIMI's postures and activities in the country thereafter—the group's logo includes a Quran, an AK-47 assault rifle and a globe. Students Islamic Movement of India started as a united platform for Muslim students and youth in the country,[238] with the objective to restore the Caliphate for the unity of the *ummah* by rejecting the concept of nationalism, secularism and democracy. The group's aim was to establish Dar-ul-Islam (land of Islam) by using violence, if necessary, to convert non-Muslims.

Islam, SIMI believes, has laid down a complete code of conduct for Muslims to follow, with detailed rules regulating such private matters as dress and food habits as well as collective affairs such as politics, economics and international relations.

The group's ideological inspirations were derived from Muslim thinkers who had launched Islamic movements in the subcontinent in the past, e.g. Shah Walliyu'llah, Sayyid Ahmad and Haji Shariat Allah and Maududi. Students Islamic Movement of India was deeply inspired by Maududi's goal to make Islam the supreme organizing principle for the social and political life of the Muslim community as a whole through the concepts of *iqamat-i-deen* and *hukumat-i-ilahiya*. In its annual report, SIMI reiterated these tenets urging Muslim youths to struggle for the revival of Islam in the light of the Quran and Sunna.[239]

The first decade of SIMI's existence was dominated by JIH's leadership. However, owing to internal differences, and increasing radicalism within the cadres of SIMI, JIH had disassociated itself from the group by establishing another parallel student Islamic body, the SIO. Nevertheless, the success of the Islamic Revolution had impacted SIMI's optimism for an Islamic state to a larger extent.

As an Islamic movement, SIMI undertakes missionary activities especially among non-Muslims, trying to impress them with its own version of Islam. It operates essentially through

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238 Mushirul Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India's Muslims since Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 208.

239 Students Islamic Movement of India's publication, "The Saga of Struggle," has been quoted in R. Upadhyay, "Students Islamic Movement of India," Paper no. 825, *South Asia Analysis Group*, October 30, 2003, www.southasiaanalysis.org.

personal networks, meetings, and conferences as well as the numerous magazines that it publishes in English as well as several Indian languages. Similar to TJ, SIMI too sees Islam as a complete worldview and ideology, governing every aspect of a Muslim's personal as well as collective life. Islam, SIMI believes, has laid down a complete code of conduct for Muslims to follow, with detailed rules regulating such private matters as dress and food habits as well as collective affairs such as politics, economics and international relations.[240]

According to SIMI, a true Muslim cannot lead his life in accordance with Islam in a pluralist, secular society which is un-Islamic. Thus, an organized struggle to establish the Islamic state is largely imperative and is a duty for each Muslim.[241] Students Islamic Movement of India also believes in jihad and is ready to wage jihad against nonbelievers and whoever puts hurdles in the path of the struggle for establishing the Caliphate. Gradually, SIMI's adoption of the Quran, jihad and *shahadat* (martyrdom) as its constitution, path and desire respectively branded it as a radical and violent outfit.

In the early 1990s, SIMI activists were indoctrinated by Pakistan's ISI and travelled far and wide to garner support.

In the early 1990s, SIMI activists were indoctrinated by Pakistan's ISI and travelled far and wide to garner support. The outfit convened an *Ikhwanul* (Muslim Brotherhood) conference in Kanpur city in October 1999 which was attended by around 20,000 people including Sheikh Yaseen (Hamas), Qazi Hussain Ahmed (JI, Pakistan) and the imam of the al Aqsa mosque. In 2001, SIMI again convened a mass conclave in Mumbai, especially for Muslim youths. It was here that SIMI urged fellow Indian Muslims to launch an armed jihad in India with the establishment of an Islamic caliphate as the goal. The SIMI network is actively involved in conversion in the southwestern states of India.

Students Islamic Movement of India has operational ties with many militant student bodies including the Saudi Arabian Jamayyatul Ansar (JA) and Bangladesh's Islamic Chhatra Shivir, Jamiat-e-Talaba of Pakistan, and Ittehad al-Tallab al-Muslimeen of Myanmar. The Saudi Arabia-based JA is mostly comprised of SIMI activists, primarily expatriate Indian Muslims. The ideological affinity with Hamas was revealed by SIMI's financial secretary Salim Sajid following his arrest in June 2002.[242] According to Sajid, Hamas's former spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yasin had endorsed the "freedom struggle" in India's Jammu and Kashmir state and the reconstruction of the demolished Babri Masjid in Uttar Pradesh.

Besides ideological support, financial aid too comes from these sources. In addition, SIMI has always kept ties floating with the Jamaats in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Among other sources of funding, the role of WAMY in Riyadh and the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations based in Kuwait are well established. Even the US-based Consultative Committee of Indian Muslims supported SIMI in its transnational Islamic activities.[243] Additionally, Kashmir-

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240 Yoginder Sikand, "Countering Fundamentalism: Beyond the Ban on SIMI," *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 6, 2001, 3803.

241 Yoginder Sikand, "The Perils of Islamist Radicalism: The Students Islamic Movement of India," *Qalandar: Islam and Interfaith Relations in South Asia* (February 2005).

242 Animesh Roul, "Students Islamic Movement of India: A Profile," *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 7 (April 6, 2006).

243 "SIMI has extensive pan-Islamic links," *The Hindu*, September 28, 2001.

centric Pakistani terrorist outfits like Hizbul Mujahedeen, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad have had strong logistical and operational ties with SIMI. In late 2002, Maharashtra police seized as many as 30 compact discs containing speeches of Maulana Masood Azhar, chief of Jaish-e-Muhammad, along with clippings of communal riots in Gujarat from SIMI offices in Aurangabad.

Students Islamic Movement of India's pro-Taliban stance in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the group's anti-U.S. demonstrations in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan, and SIMI's glorification of Osama bin Laden as the "ultimate jihadi" prompted the Indian government to impose a ban on the group in 2001. After the government proscription, SIMI operated closely with the Hyderabad-based Tehreek Tahaffuz-e-Shair-e-Islam and the radical Islamic vigilante outfit, the Darsgah Jihad-o-Shahadat ("Institute for Holy War and Martyrdom") which has countrywide centers teaching self-defense training to Muslim youths and aims to make the Quran the constitution of India. Students Islamic Movement of India also operated through the Islamic Youth Front in Kerala and the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnetra Kazhagam. Intelligence agencies have established SIMI's involvement in major terrorist strikes in India and believe that the outfit has created the country's first homegrown terror network called the Indian *Mujahedeen* (IM). The Indian Mujahedeen email manifestos shed some light on its objectives: to spread Islam to India, to wage jihad against the "infidels" and to establish "God's government" according to Quranic tenets.[244]

Students Islamic Movement of India attempts to indoctrinate youths by convincing them to fight for Islam. To accomplish this goal, SIMI uses provocative audio/video clippings which selectively depict the atrocities committed against Muslims from Gujarat to Kashmir and from Bosnia to Afghanistan. What was started as a student movement, SIMI has become a major radical Islamist movement in due course with a strong presence in most of the northern and southern states of India. Students Islamic Movement of India, along with other militant outfits, has jointly carried out many terrorist acts including the September 13, 2008 serial blasts in Delhi and multiple explosions in Ahmedabad and Jaipur as well as blasts in Uttar Pradesh courts in the recent past.[245]

Contestations among Indian Islamic Movements

Contrary to popular perceptions, most Islamic movements do not strive for the greater unity of Muslims (the so called Ummatic notion of Islam), even if they find consensus at times, especially when Islam is perceived to be under attack. In India at least, there is no unanimity among Muslims about various facets of Islam. Indian Muslims are as divided as followers of other religious groups and most of the Islamic movements thrive within India's polarized political environment. There is ample degree of animosity and competition among various groups to dominate each other. The sectarian rift is visible as Deobandis are in conflict with Sunni-Sufi centric movements, such as the Barelvis, when it comes to Islamic practice and observances. However, unlike in Pakistan, in India these two movements have never confronted one another with violence or killings.

Similarly, the ties between TJ and Ahle Sunnat, affiliated to the Barelvi tradition, are not cordial and followers of these movments often clash with each other. A significant development took place in Gujarat in early 2002 when TJ became embroiled in a confrontation with the dominant Ahl-e-Sunnat wal'Jamaat leadership over mosque holdings. The Ahl-e-Sunnat wal'Jamaat is

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[244] For a detailed analysis on IM as a homegrown Jihadi outfit, see Animesh Roul, "India's Home-Grown Jihadi Threat: A Profile of the Indian Mujahedeen," *Terrorism Monitor* 7, no. 4 (March 3, 2009).

[245] "SC extends ban on SIMI for alleged terrorist activities," *IBN Live*, October 13, 2008.

a Barelvi organization, and is opposed to Islamic groups affiliated to the Deoband and Salafi traditions, including TJ. Gradually, with an increasing support base, TJ started dominating the Islamic landscape in Gujarat by establishing new mosques, *maktabs* and *madrassas*, carrying out regular travel and preaching activities. One estimate shows that in Gujarat alone, TJ has taken over 80 percent of the mosques previously run by the Ahl-e-Sunnat wal'Jamaat. These are not isolated events but systematic execution of plans for TJ's expansion. To outpace the Ahl-e-Sunnat wal'Jamaat and other Sunni-Sufi sects who have been influential in rural pockets, TJ/Deoband has been evidently trying to broaden their support structure in rural and semi-urban areas and TJ is overtly instrumental in doing so.

However, to counter the spread and power of TJ, another Barelvi Islamic movement, Dawat-e-Islami (DeI), took root in the India in the early 1980s and consolidated its position rather strongly to restrict TJ's influence in the region with a wide network of *madrassas* in Pakistan. The Indian branch reshaped its activities after splitting with the DeI's parent body based in Karachi in 1992, following the first annual DeI congregation. With the same objective of countering TJ in India, the Sunni Dawat-e-Islami (SDI) came into being as an independent, apolitical and purely religious movement with headquarters in Mumbai and Preston, UK.[246] Sunni Dawat-e-Islami largely follows TJ with regular weekly and annual congregations, unified dress code and regular *dawra* (educational visits), and also through establishing SDI *madrassas* around the country. These *madrassas* are established with funds from the Ibad-ur-Rahman Trust, Manchester, and the World Memon Organization (WMO).[247]

Confrontation with the Ahle Hadith

There is an inherent tendency of sectarianism within AH as it rejects many common Islamic practices such as postures in congregational prayers. Also, AH rejects Sufism.[248] While the Deobandi school and Barelvis confront each other on issues such as religious space and rituals, both these movements have been critical about AH's worldview. Due to AH's rigid nonconformist ideology and practice, its adherents are subjected to social boycott in some places in India and the *ulema* of the Deoband and Barelvi groups never hesitate to issue *fatwas* against AH, terming AH followers as "allies of the devil." Evidently, the ultra-conservative Gorba faction of AH is considered to be the ideological inspiration behind the militant form of Islam in India. In 1985, this Gorba faction called for an organized Muslim armed resistance in the country to counter all communal violence, questioning the legitimacy of the Indian state. Both the Deoband school and TJ had kept distance from this reactionary position that time.

Conclusion

The above discussion of Indian Islamic movements and networks points to one common factor—all these movements are centered around the religious aspects of Islam, with varied

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246 The SDI movement led by Moulana Mohammed Shakir Noori has been spreading to various parts of the world, under the guidance of the scholars of the Ahl-e-Sunnat wal'Jamaat. Besides India and the UK, it is emerging as a major challenge to TJ in the US, Canada, Africa, Portugal and Saudi Arabia. For SDI's activities, see the movement's official website, www.sunnidawateislami.net. About the SDI's confrontation with TJ and Deobandi *ulema*, see, for example, Thomas K. Gugler, "Public Religiosity and the Symbols of the Super Muslim: Sunnah and Sunnaization in Muslim Faith Movements from South Asia," *Third Frame: Literature, Culture and Society* 1, no. 3, (July-September, 2008): 43-60.

247 The Memon diaspora connection is helpful to SDI as a counterweight to the TJ's Gujarati trader networks. See, Gugler, "Public Religiosity and the Symbols of the Super Muslim," 55.

248 Ibid. Also see M. Azam Qasmi, "Sufism and the Founders of Deoband," 357.

degrees of socio-political orientations. At the socio-political level, Deobandis and JIH have been playing a leading role in fighting for the rights of Muslims in India, whereas TJ and AH have been spearheading religious fervor among the Indian Muslims. In contrast, SIMI has been taking a different path altogether with the strong but quiet support of most of these Islamic institutions. Another commonality that surfaced is these movements' search for a unique Muslim identity in India. The rise of Hindu fervor and the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 put an already vulnerable and impoverished Indian Muslim community on the defensive, causing many Indian Muslims to draw increasingly closer towards their religion in search for relief. Through strict observance of the fundamental rituals of Islam, the Tablighs and AH attempt to create a gulf between Muslims and people of other religions in India, especially Hindus.

One important aspect that one can easily be witnessed is that most of the activist oriented Islamic movements, be they the Tablighis or AH, have gained considerable success not only in India but in other countries as well with substantial patronage in terms of funding and other support from their Arab and Pakistani counterparts and from the ever expanding Muslim diaspora. Of course, there are triggering factors that encouraged the movements in India, e.g., the Islamic Revolution or the existing rift between Hindu and Muslims. However, the existing ideological differences among these Islamic movements and the inherent squabbling have resulted in diluting the Islamic power structure in India.

The conflicts that surround different Islamic movements have neither helped Muslims to reach consensus as to what should be the ideals of the religion or how improvements can be brought out to strengthen the community in the Indian setting.

The conflicts that surround different Islamic movements have neither helped Muslims to reach consensus as to what should be the ideals of the religion or how improvements can be brought out to strengthen the community in the Indian setting. Due to this reason, perhaps, there is not a single and strong Muslim political or religious grouping in India. The newly founded Sunni Dawat-e-Islam has challenged TJ's growth and has substantially curtailed the TJ's influence on Indian Muslims.

These inherent differences have jeopardized two things which would retard the future growth of Islam in India and beyond: the larger Islamic goal of building a community of believers in the immediate future and the institutionalization of Islam in various facets of public life, especially in a minority political setting. However, the changing Islamic political landscape in neighboring Bangladesh and Pakistan, where terrorist outfits have political parties with overt ties to transnational movements and networks (e.g., Jamaat-i-Islami and Harkat-ul Jihadi Islami), and the resurgent Islamic violence in the region will likely dictate the future trajectories of transnational Islam in India.

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Transnational Islam in Indonesia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Indonesia is generally associated with a peaceful and tolerant form of Islam. The recent rise of militant Islamist groups in post-Suharto Indonesia, however, and the alleged links of some of these groups to the Southeast Asian terrorist network, the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), raises concerns. This paper assesses the current status of transnational Islamist discourse in Indonesia, in general, and Indonesian Islamist militant groups, in particular, examining their impact on Indonesia's socio-political and conflict dynamics. Indonesian Islam is seen as increasingly infused with transnational Islamist currents and activism arising from a global Islamic awakening. The paper argues that Islamist militants do not currently pose a significant threat to Indonesia's security as many have shifted their strategy of violent jihad toward nonviolent Islamic missionary work and grassroots "Islamization from below."

MAIN FINDINGS

The collapse of Suharto's regime and Indonesia's transition towards democracy gave impetus to the emergence of various Islamists groups competing for the liberated public sphere. The most radical among these groups—such as the Front Pembela Islam (FPI), the Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the Laskar Jihad (LJ), and the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI)—rejected participation in the existing system, calling instead for violent jihad. The radical and militant groups' success waging jihad in Indonesia's conflict areas paralleled the phenomenal development of the Islamist media in the country, which played a crucial role in disseminating propaganda and directing public opinion. The pressures of the Indonesian government and pro-democracy Muslim groups against violent Islamist discourse and jihadist activism, however, have gradually forced the transnational Islamist groups to leave behind their high profile politics and shift towards a strategy of implementing the *shari'a* from below at the grassroots level. No longer seeing violent jihad as a relevant means for realizing their goals, many groups now argue that *da'wa* is more appropriate to foster Indonesian Muslims' awareness of their duty to uphold the supremacy of the *shari'a*. These groups also believe that nonviolent endeavors are more suitable to Indonesia's current situation and crucial to defend Muslim solidarity and the long-term struggle for a comprehensive Islamic order.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Organizationally, Indonesia's transnational Islamist groups are largely broken; their leaders and members are mired in debates and conflicts. However, as social movements, embedded in interpersonal networks and informal nodes of activism, they retain deep roots and visions of establishing an Islamic state. Some seek to consolidate themselves by fanning the flames of sensitive Islamic issues, but they have to first confront the Indonesian government and the pro-democracy alliances that firmly reject jihadism.
- The one hope for the militant jihadists depends on the mushrooming *da'wa* groups which designate Indonesia's youth as the main target for Islamizing society at the individual level. Although such groups seemingly delegitimize the jihadists' struggle, their growing influence among youths no doubt broadens the Islamist constituences that can potentially be drawn into the jihadist orbits. This is especially so if the state and civil society forces fail to demonstrate their commitment for good governance and accountability and systematically campaign for democracy and human rights.

Home to the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has generally been associated with a peaceful and tolerant form of Islam and even perceived as a country developing into the most pluralist and democracy-friendly nation-state in the entire Muslim world. The rise of militant Islamist groups in post-Suharto Indonesia, however, calling for jihad and other violent actions, raised concerns. Underlying these militant groups' demands for the comprehensive application of the *shari'a* (Islamic law) was skepticism of the existing system that, they claimed, had created the opportunity for a global Zionist-American conspiracy to alter Indonesia's course to becoming an Islamic state. No doubt, the growing influence of radical Islam in post-Suharto Indonesia has raised questions about the way Indonesian Islam has increasingly become infused with the transnational Islamist discourse and activism arising from a pan-Islamic awakening and global jihadism.

Scholars argue that unprecedented global flows of people, ideas, cultures and civilizations are currently modifying conventional conceptions of world politics and calling into question the hegemony of nationalist and statist forms of political identity. Expressions of Islam and politics taking place in the particular context of the nation-state can thus no longer be isolated from new transnational forms of political organization, mobilization and practice which are coming into being through globalized political and social spaces.[249] It is therefore appropriate to examine how the related patterns which are emerging out of this situation affect the current dynamics of Indonesian Islam and shape the multiplicity of its expressions and appearances.

Expressions of Islam and politics taking place in the particular context of the nation-state can thus no longer be isolated from new transnational forms of political organization, mobilization and practice which are coming into being through globalized political and social spaces.

Following a brief historical background charting the rise of transnational Islamist currents in Indonesia, this paper turns to assess the current status of Indonesia's key Islamist militant groups, examining their internal organization and impact on Indonesia's socio-political and conflict dynamics. The paper devotes particular attention to the Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Front of the Defenders of Islam), the Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI, Indonesia's Party of Liberation), the Laskar Jihad (LJ, Jihad Paramilitary Force), the Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia (LMI, Indonesian Holy Warrior Force), and the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI).

[249] See Azza Karam, Transnational Political Islam: Globalization, Ideology and Power (London: Pluto Press, 2003); Olivier Roy, Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah (London: Hurst, 2004); and Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (London: Routledge, 2004).

Next, this paper analyzes the grassroots and nonviolent missionary strategies Indonesia's transnational Islamist groups have adopted to adjust their discourse and activism to local contexts and changing circumstances. Pressured by Indonesia's pro-democracy Muslim alliances and the Indonesian government, these groups' room to maneuver has narrowed. The Islamists have been forced to shift their strategy towards the implementation of the *shari'a* from below. While the Islamists intensify outreach activities, *da'wa* movements have emerged designating Indonesian youths as their main target. Implicit in this strategic shift is the transnational Islamists' attempt to prolong their existences and retain their final dream of creating an Islamic state through varying tactical means.

Following its discussion of "Islamization from below," the paper examines the equally important Islamist media in Indonesia which continues to play a significant role in disseminating Islamist ideology and influence. The paper then presents concluding remarks incorporating significant policy implications.

Historical Background: The Rise of Transnational Islam in Indonesia

Most of the leaders behind Indonesia's transnational militant organizations are young Islamists who became acquainted with various transnational ideas and experiences through their interactions with members of the global *umma* (or Muslim community). Some of them participated in the global jihad in Afghanistan where they made contacts with jihadist fighters from different parts of the world and explored ideas and ideologies in an environment based on the ethos of jihad. This experience stimulated their spirit of combat as well as their militant opposition to what they perceived as the Western-inspired secular tyranny threatening the Muslim world. Extolling the slogan *al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa nahy 'an'l-munkar* (a Qur'anic phrase meaning "enjoining good and opposing vice"), they sought to frame their discourse and activism by placing the domestic issues of Indonesian Islam more coherently within the context of global conflicts in the Muslim world. The emerging Islamists groups attempted to mobilize their members to stage protests against what they claimed to be the enemies of Islam who were perceived as destroying the supremacy of the *shari'a*.

The rise of transnational Islamist actors that actively call for jihad can also be seen against the background of the rise of Saudi Arabia as the main political player in the Muslim world and this country's promulgation of Wahhabism as a major plank of its foreign policy. Clothed in the language of Islamic solidarity, piety, and brotherhood, Saudi Arabia ran its campaigns by distributing money for the construction of mosques, Islamic schools, as well as funding *da'wa* activities for Islamic organizations all over the world. In Indonesia, Saudi Arabia supported the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII, Indonesian Council of Islamic Proselytizing) which served as a staunch ally of the *Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami* (World Islamic League) in executing Saudi Arabia's campaigns in Indonesia.[250] Saudi Arabia set up the Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic (LIPIA) in Jakarta in 1980.

[250] Despite its historical linkage with Indonesia's first and largest Islamic political party, Masyumi, the DDII preferred to focus on *da'wa* activities as a strategy to extricate itself from Suharto's pressure. On the basis of strategic considerations too, the DDII designated university campuses as one of the most important *da'wa* targets to disseminate Islamist ideas, provide a model for Islamic activism, and sponsor projects for building mosques and Islamic centers. DDII's ideas were borrowed from the Jamaat-i-Islami's Abul A'la al-Mawdudi (1903-1979) and the Muslim Brotherhood's Sayyid Qutub (1906-1966), among other Islamist ideologues.

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 challenged the central position of Saudi Arabia. The revolution provided a blueprint for the establishment of an Islamic state and encouraged students to observe their Islamic obligations. Saudi Arabia worked to contain the threat of revolutionary Islamic activism arising from the Iranian revolution by intensifying the spread of Wahhabism. This situation provided a precondition for the growth of transnational Islamist ideology in Indonesia. Alongside the slogan of "Islam is the solution," the concept of *jahiliyya*, or ignorance, as interpreted by Qutb quickly gained wide currency. Qutb's interpretation prompted Islamists to resist the established order.[251] In the second half of the 1970s, various uprisings and terrors in the name of Islam in fact flared up in a number of Indonesian provinces as a protest against Suharto's determination to marginalize political Islam.

The return of Middle Eastern graduates and Afghan War veterans gave a remarkable boost to the expansion of transnational Islamism in Indonesia. The impact of these individuals on the established Indonesian Muslim organizations, such as the modernist Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad, and Persis, and the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), cannot be underestimated. Cadres that had completed their studies in the Middle East and who had undergone their baptism in the Afghan war criticized their own organizations, which they perceived as having lost their reformist spirit, having grown preoccupied with politics and managing schools, orphanages, and hospitals.

Challenges posed by the "globally experienced new reformers camp" sparked debates and polemics among the organizations, which were increasingly forced to adjust their discourse and activism and not to limit themselves to domestic issues and concerns. These organizations were also demanded to support efforts to transform Indonesia into a fully Islamic society by intensifying *da'wa* activities. Although many *'ulama* and religious teachers affiliated with the organizations were aware that the transnational Islamist actors might challenge their established religious practices, they hardly refused the Islamists' legitimacy as *da'wa* partners to struggle for the glorification of Islam (*syi'ar Islam*) in Indonesia.

> Emphasizing that what happens in Indonesia is directly connected to the perceived global crisis in the Muslim world, the groups presented the shari'a, khilafa (caliphate) system and jihad as the only solution to curb the ongoing crises afflicting Indonesia.

Jihadist Activism after Suharto

The efflorescence of transnational Islamist discourse and activism in the final years of Suharto's New Order regime provided the foundation for the explosion of militant Islamist groups in

[251] According to Qutb, the concept of *jahiliyya*, which originally referred to the period before Islam, accurately described the situation of the Muslim populace under the nationalist regimes as being in a state of ignorance and barbarism. See Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*, trans. Jon Rothschild (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

the political arena of post-Suharto Indonesia. These groups mobilized members and aspiring *mujahidin* to stand shoulder-to-shoulder and fight jihad in Indonesia. The key success to the movements' mobilizing process lies in the preexisting Islamist networks which had become so widespread across the country alongside the efflorescence of Islamist ideology. Taking the form of Islamic study cells, *da'wa* groups, *madrassa* clusters, mosques, and media, among other things, these networks allow individuals opportunities to interact, negotiate, and establish conceptual and motivational frameworks for their actions. Emphasizing that what happens in Indonesia is directly connected to the perceived global crisis in the Muslim world, the groups presented the *shari'a, khilafa* (caliphate) system and jihad as the only solution to curb the ongoing crises afflicting Indonesia. These groups questioned the format of the modern nation-state while expressing their profound interest in the establishment of Indonesia as an Islamic state.

Front Pembela Islam (FPI)

FPI was founded by Muhammad Rizieq Shihab, a young man of Hadrami descent that graduated from the Saudi-funded LIPIA. This organization is loosely organized with open membership. Most members come from the mosque youth organizations scattered throughout Jakarta and a number of Islamic schools (*madrassa*s) in the region. In its capacity as a paramilitary organization, however, FPI is more tightly organized and has a distinct, stratified system identified by Arabic terms. It is divided into *jundi* (soldier), *rais* (chiefs), *amir* (commander), *qa'id* (leader), *wali* (guardian), *imam* (the head of staff), and *imam besar* (commander-in-chief). The organization's leadership encourages members to listen to regular religious lectures in which the importance of jihad and the spirit of the motto "to live nobly or better die in holy war as a martyr" are consistently emphasized.[252]

Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)

The success of FPI inspired the emergence of similar organizations. Hizb ut-Tahrir, originally a transnational Islamist movement established by the Palestinian Taqiy al-Din an-Nabhani in 1953 and began to register as an underground organization in Indonesia in the early 1980s, openly proclaimed its existence in the political arena of post-Suharto Indonesia in 2000 by calling itself the Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). At that time its activists conducted an international conference of the Islamic caliphate in Jakarta which brought together thousands of young participants. Under the leadership of Muhammad al-Khattat, this organization has been involved in demonstrations to call for the enforcement of the *shari'a* and the establishment of the *khilafa* system (Islamic caliphate). While its counterpart, the Muslim Brotherhood-inspired *tarbiyya* (education) movement, was transformed into a political party—the Party of Justice (and Prosperity)—HTI remains consistent in viewing Indonesia's existing political system as illegitimate and thus refuses to participate in the general elections.

Laskar Jihad (LJ) and the Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal- Jama'ah (FKAWJ)

The loose character of FPI's and HTI's membership distinguishes both from LJ, a paramilitary group uniting young men who call themselves Salafis, the followers of the *Salaf al-Salih* (pious ancestors). This group was active under the umbrella organization Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sun-

[252] On the complete structure of the Laskar Pembela Islam organization, see Front Pembela Islam, *Struktur Laskar FPI* (Jakarta: Sekretariat FPI, 1999).

nah wal-Jama'ah (FKAWJ, Forum for Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet), whose establishment was officially inaugurated in the palpably religious mass gathering, *tabligh akbar,* held in Yogyakarta in January 2000. Even before its official establishment, FKAWJ was already in existence; it had its beginnings in the Jamaah Ihyaus Sunnah, which was basically an exclusive *da'wa* (Islamic proselytizing) movement focusing on the purity of the faith and the subsequent moral integrity of individuals.[253]

Laskar Jihad was established by Ja'far Umar Thalib (b. 1961), also a young man of Hadrami descent, in collaboration with other leading personalities among the Salafis, including Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, Ayip Syafruddin, and Ma'ruf Bahrun. Before studying at LIPIA, Thalib had been enrolled at a *pesantren* (an Islamic boarding school), under the aegis of a Muslim modernist organization, Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union, Persis), in Bangil, East Java. In the mid-1980s, he went to Pakistan to study at the Islamic Mawdudi Institute in Lahore. During his stay there, he had an opportunity to travel to Afghanistan, which was then in the throes of its long, grueling war against the Soviet Union. He claims to have had remarkable experiences in the Afghan battlefields with different factions of Afghan *mujahidin* (holy warriors). Lessons learned from these encounters were later reinforced by his academic journey to the Middle East to study with prominent religious authorities, particularly Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i of Yemen.

Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia (LMI) and Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI)

Another militant group, Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, emerged as the latest, but probably most deeply rooted, militant Muslim organization which champions the implementation of the *shari'a* and spearheads anti-American actions in Indonesia. LMI is a paramilitary wing of the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), a loose alliance of a dozen minor Muslim paramilitary organizations that had been scattered among cities such as Solo, Yogyakarta, Kebumen, Purwokerto, Tasikmalaya, and Makassar, where the Darul Islam (Islamic Abode) rebellious movement which erupted in 1949 exerted its influence.[254] Notable member organizations of the MMI are Laskar Santri (Muslim Student Paramilitary Force), Laskar Jundullah (God's Army Paramilitary Force), Kompi Badar (Badar Company), Brigade Taliban (Taliban Brigade), Corps Hizbullah Divisi Sunan Bonang (God's Party Corps of the Sunan Bonang Division), and Pasukan Komando Mujahidin (Holy Warrior Command Force).

Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia was established as the result of the so-called "first national congress of *mujahidin*," in Yogyakarta in August 2000. Around 2,000 participants attending the congress were absorbed in discussing one central theme: the enforcement of the *shari'a* as an action necessary to resolve the problems afflicting Indonesia. Within this context, notions of the *khilafa Islamiyya* (Islamic caliphate), the *imama* (imamate), and jihad were also discussed. The congress drafted a charter called the Piagam Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Charter), which insists on rejecting all ideologies confronting and contradicting Islam and resolves to continue preaching and conducting jihad for the dignity of Islam in Indonesia.[255]

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253 From the Arabic root *da'a*, to call, which generally refers to the proselytizing that is incumbent upon every Muslim.

254 This underground movement arose in the 1970s and appeared to draw other disaffected radicals into its orbit, forming small quietist groups named *usrah* (Ar. '*usra*, literally meaning "family") in various cities under different names, such as Jamaah Islamiyah (Muslim community) in Solo, Generasi 554 in Jakarta, and NII Cirebon in Cirebon. For an overview of the NII movement, see June Chandra Santosa, "Modernization, Utopia, and the Rise of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia" (PhD dissertation, Boston University, 1996), appendix 3.

255 Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, *Mengenal Majelis Mujahidin* (Yogyakarta: Markaz Pusat MMI, 2000).

Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia has a kind of supreme body that resembles the advisory council, i.e., the so-called *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd* (literally "those who have the power to unbind and bind"). This body was led by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, on whom was bestowed the title *Amirul Mujahidin* ("the leader of holy warriors"). Ba'asyir is an elderly figure of Hadrami descent, who, in collaboration with Abdullah Sungkar, established the Pesantren al-Mukmin, a conservative Islamic boarding school, in Ngruki, Solo, Central Java, in 1972.[256] Both were arrested in November 1978 for allegedly leading the Darul Islam-inspired Negara Islam Indonesia (NII, Indonesian Islamic state) movement, and fled to Malaysia to escape another prison term in 1985. Addressing the MMI congress, Ba'asyir proclaimed that the application of the *shari'a* was absolutely essential and argued that its rejection must be countered by jihad.[257] Because of its persistence in criticizing the U.S. campaign against terrorism and its historical linkage with the NII movement, MMI attracted international attention.

Jamaah Islamiyah (JI)

MMI was suspected of links with the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), an al Qaeda-linked terrorist organization whose network of supporters extends across a number of Southeast Asian countries and whose main objective is to establish a pan-Islamic republic, incorporating Malaysia, Indonesia, southern Thailand, and the southern Philippines.[258] Jamaah Islamiyah received particular attention after Malaysian and Singaporean authorities uncovered a plot to bomb the U.S. Embassy and other Western targets in Singapore. Riduan Isamuddin, or Hambali, was suspected of being the principal JI operative in the region and of having arranged accommodations in Malaysia for Khalid al-Mihdar and Nawaf al-Hazmi, two of the hijackers of the American Airlines jet that crashed into the Pentagon on 9/11. Subsequently, a number of people suspected of links to JI were arrested in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. These included Fathur Rahman al-Gozi, Abu Jibril Abdurrahman, Taufik Abdul Halim, Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, Agus Dwikarna, Tamsil Linrung, and Abdul Jamal Balfas.[259]

Jamaah Islamiyah was founded by Abdullah Sungkar in 1996. At the apex of the JI structure sits the *amir*, the position Ba'asyir is said to have assumed on the death of Sungkar in 1999. Ba'asyir, in turn, was said to have been replaced as *amir* in late 2002 by Thoriquddin, alias Abu Rusdan, arrested in Kudus, Central Java, in April 2003. Beneath the *amir* are four councils, a governing council (*majlis qiyada*), religious council (*majlis shura*), fatwa council (*majlis fatwa*), and disciplinary council (*majlis hisba*). The governing council is headed by a central command (*qiyada markaziyya*) that in turn exerts authority over the leaders of the four divisions known as *mantiqi*s and the heads of subdivisions called *wakalah*s. Every *wakalah* is divided into *qirda*s, which are further divided into cells, the smallest unit, known as *fi'ah*.[260]

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256 For the profile of this pesantren, see, for instance, Zuly Qodir, *Ada Apa Dengan Pesantren Ngruki* (Yogyakarta: Pondok Edukasi, 2003); and E. S. Soepriyadi, *Ngruki & Jaringan Terorisme* (Jakarta: Al-Mawardi Prima, 2003).

257 Irfan S. Awwas (ed.), *Risalah Kongres Mujahidin I dan Penegakan Syari'ah Islam* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2001), 139.

258 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates," *Asia Report* 43 (2002); Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2003).

259 Agus Dwikarna was the leader of Laskar Jundullah, a faction of Laskar Mujahidin. He was arrested along with Tamsil Linrung and Abdul Jamal Balfas. See "Detained Indonesian is associate of pro-bin Laden cleric: Philippines," AFP, March 17, 2002. While the last two were later released, Dwikarna was sentenced in the Philippines to ten years. In this connection, see "Agus Dwikarna Divonis 10-17 Tahun," Republika, July 13, 2002; see also: "Indonesian Linked to Al Qaeda Cell," CNN, July 19, 2002.

260 Sidney Jones, "Jemaah Islamiyah: A Short Description," *Kultur, the Indonesian Journal for Muslim Cultures* 3, 1 (2003): 63-104; A Maftuh Abegebriel, et al, *Negara Tuhan: A Thematic Encyclopedia* (Yogyakarta: SR-Ins Publishing, 2004).

The demands of the militant Islamist groups could resonate widely in the public sphere of Indonesia which seems now so friendly to Islam. As a result of the Islamization process over the last two decades, Islam has increasingly served as a determining variable behind political negotiations, becoming the most important frame of reference for many Indonesians to reflect upon the socio-political system they imagined capable of bringing about justice and attaining veritable development. Keeping pace with the growing influence of Islam on politics, Indonesia has witnessed new global forms of religious identity, whose impact is mediated by specific, historically situated local institutions. The expansion of this so-called "glocal" Islam appears to be correlated with the accentuation of religious symbols in the public sphere, the increase of personal religiosity as well as the proliferation of Islamic institutions and new lifestyles.[261]

As a result of the Islamization process over the last two decades, Islam has increasingly served as a determining variable behind political negotiations, becoming the most important frame of reference for many Indonesians to reflect upon the socio-political system they imagined capable of bringing about justice and attaining veritable development.

In this socially and politically "Islamized" public sphere, FPI came to the fore with a basic agenda to conduct raids on cafes, discotheques, casinos and brothels and these actions were claimed as part of their attempts to secure Indonesia from the hegemony of the perceived Zionist-Christian global conspiracy to undermine Islam. Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia appeared to the public to criticize the existing political system while proposing the *khilafat* system as an alternative to cope with the problems facing Indonesia today. Under the leadership of Ja'far Umar Thalib, LJ pioneered the call for jihad in the Moluccas, deemed to be a pilot project of the Zionist-Christian conspiracy to Christianize the Indonesian archipelago. Likewise, the Laskar Mujahidin and JI were preoccupied with a campaign to send fighters to the Moluccas and Poso in Central Sulawesi, in their attempts to assist local Muslims against the Christians. The JI's bombing of Bali was part of the group's commitment to wage a permanent, aggressive jihad *a la* Abdullah Azzam and Osama bin Laden

[261] In this context, luxurious mosques with new architecture (usually derived from the Middle East) have been constructed—and they are full of congregations, mostly youthful. More and more people have gone on the hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca), complementing the popularity of the *jilbab* (scarf) for women and *baju koko* (Muslim shirts) for men. Islamic print media popularizing *da'wa* themes thrived, complete with the birth of new *da'wa* genres, such as cyber *da'wa* and cellular *da'wa*. At the same time, the so-called integrated and quality Islamic schools as well as institutions for collecting an increasingly large sum of religious alms and donations were formed. These institutions facilitated the efflorescence of Islamic banks (also known as *Shari'a* banks), Islamic insurance (*takaful*), Islamic people's credit unions (*Bank Perkreditan Rakyat Syari'ah*), and Islamic houses of treasury (*Bait al-Mal wa al-Tamwil*), reaching remote areas in the countryside.

against what it perceived as the infidel oppression of the so-called "Judeo-Crusader" coalition led by the United States.

The role of the transnational Islamist groups in facilitating the escalation of the conflicts in Indonesia cannot be overlooked. These groups exploited the transitional period following Suharto as a pretext for mobilizing the public. The presence of LJ in the Moluccas inspired the local Muslims to take up arms until the last drop of their blood.[262] There is no denying that after the coming of LJ fighters to Ambon, the aggressiveness of the Muslim side intensified significantly.[263]

The Laskar Mujahidin preferred to operate secretly in small, skilled, well-armed combatant units. Sometimes side-by-side with the Mujahidin of Kompak—a DDII-linked Muslim charity set up in 1998 that had established its footprint in the Moluccas since the outbreak of violence in January 1999—LMI attacked Christian villages and organized Islamic outreach activities and humanitarian relief.[264] Although their actual number did not exceed three hundred, including a dozen foreigners from France, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria, the Laskar Mujahidin appeared to have been more effective than the efforts of thousands of LJ combatants.

This operation was made possible thanks to the sophisticated weapons they had received from foreign groups, such as the Abu Sayyaf group in the southern Philippines. Local sources in the Moluccas revealed that the Laskar Mujahidin indeed played an important role in teaching local Muslim militias the technology for assembling bombs. They appeared to be the most favorite outside jihad group among local Muslim militias.

For the Laskar Mujahidin these Indonesian spice islands were the second jihad operation field after Poso in Central Sulawesi.[265] One of its constitutive member groups, the Laskar Jundullah, began to deploy members when the third phase of the Poso conflict broke out in May 2000. Together with other militia groups from outside, including JI, Mujahidin of Kompak, Laskar Wahdah Islamiyah, Laskar Bulan Sabit Merah, Laskar Khalid bin Walid, and Laskar Jihad, as well as local groups, such as the Forum Perjuangan Umat Islam led by Adnan Arsal, LMI formed the Muslim jihad force active in attacking Christian forces.[266]

It should be noted, however, that despite the enthusiastic responses the Laskar Jihad and the Laskar Mujahidin had received from local Muslims, the reach of their ideological influence remained limited. Since the beginning of their jihad operation in the Moluccas, LJ has attempted to spread Wahhabism among local Muslims. True to their stated purpose, they set up numerous Qur'anic learning centers, called "Al-Manshurah," and rehabilitated mosques that eventually fell into their possession. They also organized a variety of *da'wa* activities and social services, such as garbage disposal, that had stopped functioning at the outbreak of the post-Suharto conflict. In

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262 For a further account on the Laskar Jihad, see Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad Islam, Militancy and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: SEAP Cornell University, 2006).

263 In mid-May 2000, Muslim forces attacked and took over Ahuru. In the same month, they attacked Galala and the police Mobil Brigade (Brigade Mobil, Brimob) headquarters in Tantui. Simultaneously, they seized Efrata Church and Otto Kwick Hospital located in the same area. Subsequently, they attacked and seized the Christian University of the Moluccas at Talake and the State University of Pattimura at Poka. The increase in Muslim attacks on Christian targets also occurred in the North Moluccas. Under the leadership of Abu Bakar Wahid al-Banjari, Muslim militias in the islands sought and won retaliation for the events of December 1999, when Christian militias had killed more than 500 Muslims in Galela and Tobelo. Because of the upsurge in the aggressiveness of the Muslim forces during these months, almost forty Christian villages were ruined. The Moluccan Muslims believed that the hour had come to take revenge against Christians, who had previously had the upper hand. They were ready to defeat the core Christian forces mobilized by the Protestant churches.

264 Kompak helped Muslims in the Moluccas with the evacuation of bodies and documenting everything with video cameras. In the initial stage of emergence responses, it worked closely with the community assistance post (Pos Keadilan Peduli Umat) of the Partai Keadilan.

265 Interviews with members of a local Muslim militia group in Ambon, March 2002.

266 For a further account on the presence of the Mujahidin Force in Poso and its relation with other militia groups, both from outside and locals, see International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Jihad in Central Sulawesi," *Asia Report* no. 74 (3 February 2004).

a praiseworthy endeavor, LJ succeeded in building a medical clinic bearing the name of Laskar Jihad Medical Team, AhMed, in Kebun Cengkeh, that provided health services free of charge. All of these religious and social activities were deemed to be part of the group's jihad and to some extent regarded as more important that the violent jihad operation itself. However, there is no evidence that confirms the success of their campaign to spread Wahhabism as Moluccan Muslims remained reluctant to accept this particular kind of Islam.

In the eyes of the Moluccan Muslims, the Islam introduced by LJ is inapplicable to their efforts to cope with eminent threats from the Christians. They felt it necessary to work hand-in-hand and forget any religious divides. They also believed that what they had been practicing is indeed a true form of Islam. In response to LJ's increasingly aggressive campaigns for Wahhabism, Moluccan Muslims preferred to make closer alliances with the Laskar Mujahidin who they believed to have applied a more flexible standpoint in terms of religious beliefs and practices. As viewed by local Muslim militias, the LJ fighters were skillful only in reading the Qur'an and preaching to people to follow their doctrines. The LJ, according to local militias, conspicuously lacked the required tactical and strategic skills.

In Poso, the presence of LJ was truncated and insignificant, as compared to the Laskar Mujahidin and other militia groups from outside. Laskar Jihad also failed both to establish close linkages with local militias, and to exert their ideological influences among local Muslims. Unlike LJ, the Laskar Mujahidin relatively succeeded to establish branches across Central Sulawesi and recruit people, including locals, to fight in Poso. The Laskar Mujahidin collaborated with JI and the Mujahidin of Kompak and, together, these groups used the training camp set up in Pamona Selatan designed to replicate the military academy at JI's Camp Hudaibiyah in Mindanao.[267] Towards the Malino peace accord in 2001 these groups began to see Poso as fertile ground for the kind of intensive *da'wa* and religious study circles that could expand a community prepared to live by Salafi principles and as a recruiting mechanism for sustainable operations:

> Local people appeared to be receptive to JI preaching, and JI leaders in Poso had decided they could operate freely because local authorities appeared to have no control over the Muslim organizations. They also saw community leaders as sharing a commitment to Islamic law and believed a period of peace could transform Poso into a place where the law could be applied. At the very least, Poso could become what JI called a secure base (*qoidah aminah*), a refuge much like that which Medina became for the Prophet.[268]

The absence of an umbrella organization for Muslims in Poso was in fact a contributive factor to the sustainability of JI operations in this area. There, JI continued perpetrating terrors. Their space for maneuver has narrowed only recently when the Indonesian police conducted several major raids and arrested a group of men, whose identities became known as local members of JI.[269]

Unlike Muslims in Poso, Muslim leadership in the Moluccas succeeded to consolidate and, under the sponsorship of the local government, set up an umbrella organization, the Badan Imarat Muslim Maluku (the Council of United Moluccan Muslims). Chaired by Ali Fauzy, this council was responsible for efforts at reconciliation between Muslims and Christians initiated by

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267 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder," 11.

268 Ibid., 14.

269 On the latest issue on jihad in Poso, see International Crisis Group, "Jihadism in Indonesia: Poso on the Edge," *Asia Report* no. 27 (24 January 2007).

the local government, and also to counter what they considered an Arabized Islam that would further divide Moluccan Muslims. This step came at the expense of their determination to live in harmony among themselves and with other religious communities.[270]

Towards Islamization from Below

The determination of the militant Islamist groups to spark violent discourse and jihadist activism might not be disassociated from the complicated dynamics of Indonesia's transition towards electoral democracy. This transition ushered in a plethora of opportunities for different groups and interests to emerge and compete for the newly liberated public sphere. The longevity of such discourse and activism is, therefore, largely the result of how long the political opportunity is available. The attempts made by the Indonesian government to strengthen capacity building and counter-terrorism capabilities as a response to the rising threat of terrorism after 9/11 have significantly reduced the maneuvering room available to militant groups.[271]

As a result, many terrorist cells have been destroyed and their operational spaces have been tightened. Dr. Azahari, a Malaysian believed to be behind the terrorist bombings in Indonesia in the past years, was shot by the police's counter-terrorism unit at his hideout in Malang, East Java. Azahari's supporting cells in Semarang, Wonosobo, Kebumen, Solo, Sleman, and Surabaya were subsequently discovered as a result of the intensifying operations by the police against JI-linked jihadists in Poso, Central Sulawesi.[272] Recently, the police have even succeeded not only to arrest Abu Dujana, who served as the *qaid* (leader) of one of the JI's *sariyah* (brigade). They also succeeded to discover the remnants of the JI network operating in West Java and Sumatra, which allegedly had a link with another Malaysian terrorist, Nordin M. Top, and which had prepared a series of bombing attacks in various provinces in Indonesia.

These arrests reveal the weakening base of JI support and reflect its current status as a shattered terrorist network with no central leadership and command. Since his release in 1996, Ba'asyir himself has been active in promoting nonviolent endeavors to defend Muslim solidarity and the struggle for the application of the *shari'a*. Ba'asyir claimed that violence would give a bad image to Islam itself. He even showed his disagreement with the ways undertaken by Dr. Azahari and Nordin M. Top, and recently withdrew from his position as MMI's *Amir al-Mujahidin*. It should be noted, however, in the absence of organizational support and institutionalized access to politics, the remaining JI cells may remain dangerous, as their members are likely to quietly repress anger and perceived grievances, fearing retribution from the authorities.

In tandem with government attempts to combat terrorism, various pro-democracy groups express their concern and anxiety about the Islamists' threat to Indonesia's plural and democratic society. These groups are particularly concerned with the Islamists' discourse on the supremacy

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270 Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, April 2003.

271 In the context of the global campaign against terrorism, President Megawati Sukarnoputri issued the Government Regulation in Lieu of Legislation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 1/2002 on Combating Criminal Acts of Terrorism and the Presidential Instruction No. 4/2002 that ordered the Coordinating State Minister of Politics and Security Affairs to take the necessary steps to curb terrorism. These regulations were subsequently strengthened by the anti-terrorism Law No. 15 and 16/2003. Megawati's successor, President Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, has continued the campaigns by strengthening Indonesia's counter-terrorist capabilities through networking and training and education programs, seminars, conferences, and joint operations.

272 On arrests by the police counter-terrorism unit and its implication to weakening Indonesia's militant Islamist network, and especially JI's current status, see International Crisis Group, "Weakening Indonesia's Mujahidin Networks: Lesson from Maluku and Poso," *Asia Report* no. 103 (13 October 2005); and International Crisis Group, " Indonesia: Jamaah Islamiyah's Current Status," *Asia Briefing* no. 63 (3 May 2007).

of the *shari'a* and jihad, which has been used by the militant groups to persecute minorities and marginalize plural expressions. Representatives of the majority of Indonesian Muslims—the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the Muhammadiyah—have worked closely together to promote inter-religious harmony, democracy, egalitarianism, and gender equality. At the same time, the two organizations continue to exercise a profoundly moderating and democratic influence on Islam and Indonesian politics through their campaigns asserting that Islam and democracy are compatible and their condemnation of Islamic radicalism.

The NU's and Muhammadiyah's campaign against Islamic militancy and radicalism has encouraged the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Council of *'Ulama*) to express their opinions. The head of MUI's *fatwa* (religious edict) commission, Ma'ruf Amin, for example, stated that, "Terrorism and suicide bombing are totally forbidden in Islam. It is not the form of jihad and martyrdom whatsoever." This semi-governmental body of the *'ulama* issued a *fatwa* on terrorism[273] and set up a special team—*Tim Penanggulangan Terorisme Melalui Pendekatan Ajaran Islam*—to challenge terrorism through, among other means, the publication and distribution of anti-violent religious sermons (*khutbah anti-kekerasan*).

The government and pro-democracy groups' pressures against violent discourse and jihadist activism have gradually forced the transnational Islamist groups to leave behind their high profile politics and shift towards a strategy of implementing the *shari'a* from below.

However, because of its willingness to accommodate diverse streams of Indonesian Muslims and show its status as the "servant of the *umma*" (*khadim al-umma*), MUI paradoxically incorporated representatives from hard-line groups. Within this context, we should understand why MUI issued a number of controversial *fatwa*s prohibiting religious pluralism and liberal Islam. Instead of guarding the harmonious relations among the different religious groups, MUI in this regard acted as a religious authority that triggers further tensions and conflicts in society.

The government and pro-democracy groups' pressures against violent discourse and jihadist activism have gradually forced the transnational Islamist groups to leave behind their high profile politics and shift towards a strategy of implementing the *shari'a* from below. The groups apparently no longer see the relevance of jihad as a means for the comprehensive application of the *shari'a*. Instead, they argue that *da'wa* is more appropriate to endorse Indonesian Muslims' awareness of their duty to uphold the supremacy of the *shari'a*. These groups also now believe that nonviolent endeavors will be more suitable to Indonesia's current situation and crucial to defend

[273] This is the MUI's fatwa no 2/2004 stating that terrorism, both individual and collective, is forbidden (*haram*). It is considered a *hirabah* crime from the Islamic legal perspective as it is harmful to the public order and engenders worries and uncertainties. Terrorism in this fatwa is contrasted to jihad, which is considered compulsory to defend Muslims from the aggression and attacks of their enemies, thus rendering the fatwa somehow vague.

Muslim solidarity and the long-term struggle for the comprehensive application of the *shari'a*. The campaign to apply the *shari'a* from above is considered less favorable if there are no activists working at the grassroots level to boost Muslims' commitment to the application of the *shari'a* in their everyday lives.[274]

This strategic change of the transnational Islamist groups towards "Islamization from below" justifies the critique of Francois Burgat[275] on Olivier Roy's thesis[276] on the historical shift of Islamism. Roy defines Islamism as a modern political Islamic movement that claims to re-create a true Muslim society by creating a new Islamic order through revolutionary and militant political action. As a result of its failures to change the political landscape of the Muslim world, Roy argues, the Islamist movement shifted towards so-called neo-fundamentalism, which he defines as a non-revolutionary Islamic movement attempting to re-Islamize society at the grassroots level without being formed within an Islamic state. As a matter of fact, the militant Islamist movements have never undergone a profound transformation from revolutionary to social modes of action. Both tendencies have constantly coexisted, and the choice of a certain mode has very often been determined by political constraints.

Apparently, the democratic consolidation occurring over the last five years in Indonesia only forced the transnational Islamist groups to reduce their jihadist activism and violent tactics. In the atmosphere of mounting religious revival which is a result of a long process of Islamization, there is still some space left for the groups to continue spreading their militant discourses and activism. In fact, demonstrations organized by aspiring jihadists, including those in the Indonesian Muslim Solidarity Forum (Forum Solidaritas Umat Islam) and the Anti-Apostasy Movement Alliance (Aliansi Gerakan Anti Pemurtadan), repeatedly erupt against minority religious groups. Clothed in the rhetoric of *da'wa*, these jihadists threatened to forcibly close and burn a dozen churches regarded to have been built illegally and suspected to be the headquarters where hidden Christianization projects are taking place.

Conflicts in Indonesia occur not only between religious groups, but also within religious groups. A key example of conflicts occurring within religious groups are FPI's recent attacks on the Ahmadiyahs.[277] What should be emphasized here is that if the state fails to manage such conflicts, these incidences may awaken JI sleeper cells and unite its sympathizers so that they can organize new collective actions to achieve their common goal.

Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia is apparently not so interested in the Ahmadiyah issue and continues to emphasize the need to establish an Islamic caliphate. Recently HTI organized an international conference on the Islamic caliphate in Jakarta. Although thousands of participants attended this conference, HTI seems to have lost their very reason to echo the discourse on the caliphate. Din Syamsuddin, the Muhammadiyah chairman who attended the conference, asserted that the term caliphate in Islamic tradition has a broad meaning. According to Syamsuddin, the caliphate does not necessarily mean the political sovereignty of Islam. Caliphate can also simply mean the individual leadership of oneself. More importantly, the caliphate is not relevant whatsoever with

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274 For a further account on the shift of the Indonesia's militant Islamist discourse and activism towards Islamization from below, see Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islamic Militancy, Shari'a, and Democratic Consolidation in Post-Suharto Indonesia, *RSIS Working Paper* no. 143 (Singapore: Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2007).

275 Francois Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 54.

276 Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

277 The Ahmadiyah is a minority sect in Islam that regards the central position of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet after Muhammad. This sect sees its task as reforming and re-interpreting Muhammad's messages. For reports on a series of attacks on the Ahmadiyahs, see Aris Mustafa et al, *Ahmadiyah: Keyakinan yang Digugat* (Jakarta: Pusat Data dan Analisa Tempo, 2005).

the format of the Indonesian nation-state that the nation's founding fathers have agreed upon. HTI indeed remains consistent in rejecting democracy, but has also begun to send a signal to compromise with the existing political system. As stated by its spokesperson, Muhammad Ismail Yusanto, HTI never closed the door to transform itself into a political party.[278]

The Significance of Da'wa as an Alternative to Militancy

There is no doubt that the militant Islamist groups have opted for *da'wa* as a strategy to cope with the current situation. *Da'wa* has indeed frequently appeared to be an alternative to politics, especially when political activism is blocked in the face of state constraints. The preponderance of the militant groups themselves did not result primarily from political activism, but rather through outreach activities and interpersonal informal networks that provide an organizational grid in the community. These groups present a type of associational life that remains outside the surveillance of the state, precisely because it is informal, invisible, unregulated, and unlicensed in nature. Being embedded in society, informal networks transcend both the spatial boundaries of neighborhood, work, and state institutions, as well as cultural, class, and gender boundaries, incorporating men and women, different social classes, and various status groups into complex networks.[279]

Despite skepticism, the transnational Islamist ideologies continue to pour into Indonesian society through *da'wa* activities. Islam as a global symbol of resistance to Western political and cultural imperialism has gained further appeal especially among young Indonesian Muslims who have faced conditions of high unemployment. It is because of this kind of symbolic power associated with global Islam that youths appear to engage with Islam in the attempts to construct identity. These youths in fact serve as important *entrepots* in the flow of global Islamic revival messages, creatively translating those messages into lifestyles, fashion, arts, music, novels, books, institutions, and organizations. The messages, in turn, influence multiple social and political fields and inform the construction of a collective, transnational identity.[280]

The young activists practicing *da'wa* have organized themselves and challenged the existing system and specific policies not through revolutionary, violent means, but rather through everyday discourse and practice. They are keen to formalize religious expressions and establish an exclusive moral order in which behavior, language, and dress codes are regulated. The basic message is that to be Muslim alone is not enough to guarantee success in dealing with future challenges. There is

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278 Sinar Indonesia Baru, "HTI Bakal Jadi Parpol, Tolak Demokrasi," www.hariansib.com (August 13, 2007).

279 The strength of informal networks has nuanced the expansion of Islamist groups in the Middle East. See, for instance, Diana Singerman, "The Networked World of Islamist Social Movements," in Quintan Wiktorowicz (ed.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 143-63; and Janine A Clark, "Islamist Women in Yemen: Informal Nodes of Activism," in ibid., 164-84.

The presence of such networks was also the key to the success of the Salafis to set up a dozen Salafi madrassas in remote areas in the countryside, thus introducing a variant of more Arabized Islamic orthodoxy deeper into the heart of the *abangan* (nominal Muslim) society. It is worth noting, however, that skepticism exists among villagers in these areas regarding the motives of the Salafis to build schools. Villagers identified the Salafis sarcastically as the "bearded group" (*kelompok berjenggot*) or "*jalabiyya*-wearing" movement (*gerakan berjubah*).

Geertz divides Javanese society into *santri*, *abangan*, and *priyayi*. The term *santri* is applied to puritanical Muslims committed to a more or less normative profession of the faith, as opposed to the *abangan*, nominal Muslims, who felt comfortable with local customs influenced by Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The term *priyayi* refers to aristocratic bureaucrats of the Javanese courts, the bearers of the mystical court traditions, who, in the Geertzian paradigm, are close to the *abangan*. The criticism of the prevailing religious syncretism in Java eventually led to a split within the ranks of the *santri* themselves, creating groups which Geertz categorizes as *kolot* and *moderen*. The *kolot* are more willing to allow some non-Islamic rites a minor place in their religious observance, while the *moderen* work assiduously to expunge non-Islamic elements completely in favor of a purified Islam. See Clifford Geertz, The *Religion of Java* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960).

280 Purchasing a cheap pamphlet from a street vendor on proper Islamic dress for women, visiting a medical clinic attached to a mosque, attending study circles with clerics, making the pilgrimage to Mecca, veiling, or subscribing to a religious magazine links an individual, indirectly perhaps, to the larger transnational *umma*. The author's recent research in two mid-sized provincial towns in Indonesia reveals that despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders, nothing is entirely local in young peoples' expressions of Islam in those towns. They are part of a pan-Islamic awakening; their ordinary and everyday conversations are intertwined and influenced significantly by thinking of Islam and its practice in all parts of the world.

no choice for any Muslim but to become a Muslim *kaffah* (total Muslim) that practices and applies Islam in all aspects of his life.[281]

Iqra Club

The chief example of Indonesia's young *da'wa* activist groups is the Iqra Club (Islamic reading groups), which has a link with the Party of Justice and Prosperity. This group has become increasingly active in secondary schools and has helped to augment students' *da'wa* activities in Islamic activism units (*rohis*). Activists are obsessed with their dream to bring back the victory of the *umma*, the effort of which begins with the inculcation of Islamic values in individuals. In so doing, activists claim that they have removed obstacles and have prepared the foundation for a truly Islamic society.[282]

The Iqra Club has endeavored to package and disseminate their messages through different modes of activism. It has facilitated various programs, including *mentoring Islam* (an intensive course on Islam), *halqah* (circle, a forum for the study of Islamic sciences) and *daurah* (a type of workshop), so that senior high school students and youths in general can organize their daily lives through Islamic frameworks and terms. The Iqra Club activists have also closely collaborated with senior high school teachers to organize *liqa* (meeting), *mabit* (overnight), *rihlah* (traveling), and *mukhayyam* (camping), among other activities. As a result of these activities, Islamic nuances have achieved a prominence in senior high schools in Indonesia today. The majority of female students have adopted headscarves.

As part of its long-term strategy to prepare the future generation of Muslims committed to the dissemination of religious messages, the Iqra Club set up integrated Islamic schools at all levels, from the elementary to senior secondary. Although the schools have adopted the national curriculum, they emphasize Islamic consciousness so as to forge the students' commitment to apply Islam in a total manner and defend it from the attacks of "belligerent infidels."

Islamist Media in Indonesia

In this age of globalization, the role of the media in the spread of Islamist discourse and activism should not be neglected. The proliferation of transnational Islamism in Indonesia parallels with the explosion of Islamist media itself. A vigorous media umbrella has served as a conduit and has played a crucial role in facilitating the transnational political and religious expansion to a large segment of Indonesian Muslims, who accepted reluctantly the rhetoric of calling others to "true" Islam. By playing on transnational issues that sparked debates across the world, especially those on protracted conflicts in Palestine, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kashmir, and the Philippines, the Islamist media facilitates the Islamists' attempts to create solidarities and expand networks.

The Islamist media began to establish its foothold in Indonesia in the mid-1970s. In order to sustain its voice in the public sphere, DDII explored international Islamic issues through its mouthpiece, the monthly *Media Dakwah*. Faced with Suharto's repression and the censorship

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281 The identity as a total Muslim is quite crucial, in the sense that a Muslim cannot be considered a (faithful) Muslim without believing in and applying the totality of Islam. A total Muslim is in turn required to show his commitment to uphold the principle of *amar ma'ruf nahy munkar,* a Qur'anic phrase meaning "enjoining good and opposing vice" and become the most committed defender of Islam.

282 For an overview on the *da'wa* activities of Iqra Club and similar groups, see Tim Riset dan Pengembangan Da'wah Yayasan Darussalam, *Menuju Teladan Darussalam* (Yogyakarta: Daarussalaam Press, 2002); Izzatul Jannah, *Materi Tarbiyah untuk Remaja* (Surakarta: Ziyad Visi Media, 2006); and Nugroho Widiyantoro, *Panduan Dakwah Sekolah: Kerja Besar untuk Perubahan Besar* (Bandung: Syaamil Cipta Media, 2007).

of Islamist and leftist movements during the first half of the 1980s, however, the *Media Dakwah* could not flourish to reach a broader audience. The absence of an Islamist media that could serve as a communicative channel among *da'wa* activists and aspirant Islamists while presenting an "authentic and comprehensive picture" of Islam urged a number of campus *da'wa* activists, including Zainal Muttaqin and Rahmat Abdullah, to publish a (underground) biweekly magazine, named *Sabili* (My Way).

Despite its stated purpose to provide alternative reading material on Islam, *Sabili* became preoccupied with political issues, including the *shari'a*, the perceived Christian-Zionist conspiracy to undermine Islam, and America's reported hatred of Islam. The magazine published opinions about the need for Indonesia to return to the *shari'a* and to be transformed into an Islamic state. Referring to HTI's emphasis on the need to establish the Islamic caliphate, *Sabili* recently claimed that the transformation of Indonesia into an Islamic state will be a foundation for the establishment of the transnational Islamic caliphate that would guarantee the victory of the *umma*.[283]

Sabili also actively proposed conspiracy theories in their interpretations about contemporary issues in the Muslim world. Conflicts and violence that had erupted in different parts of the Muslim world, including Bosnia, the Philippines, North Africa, and Chechnya, were considered as evidence of the fierceness that the enemies of Islam displayed in their efforts to eliminate all Muslims from the face of the earth. Keeping pace with the escalation of conflicts in the Moluccas and Poso, the circulation of *Sabili* continued increasing to reach 100,000 copies per edition in 2000, making it the second most popular magazine after the women's magazine *Gadis*. The success of *Sabili* inspired the explosion of similar periodicals, including *Saksi, Tarbawi, Al-Izzah, Darul Islam*, and *Gema Islam*. *Salafi*, the mouthpiece of Salafis that had already registered its foundation in 1995, also flourished and reached the peak of its circulation in 2001.

The mushrooming of the Islamist periodicals has complemented and facilitated the widespread distribution of Islamist books in Indonesia. Since the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, thousands of Islamist books have been published.[284] There also appeared some books that clearly champion and propagate jihadist discourse and ideologues, including Abdullah Azzam, Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, and Abdul Qadir bin Abdul Aziz, as well as those by local jihadists, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, and the Bali bombers, Imam Samudra and Mukhlas. The books were published by a dozen newly established publishing houses, including Al-Alaq, Arafah Group, Al-Qowam Group, Kafayeh Cipta Media and Aqwam Group. In one recent report, the International Crisis Group reveals a possible link between the publishing houses and JI.[285] Although the books have circulated widely, the exact extent of their influence cannot be assessed. The book by Imam Samudra, *Aku Melawan Teroris* (I Fight Terrorists), for instance, has sold some 12,000 copies. Yet many are interested in reading the book not because of the jihadist ideology it promotes, but rather the sensation that the Bali bombers produced when they appeared in the media.

Aware that the reach of their books is limited, the Islamists have tried to take a leap into cyberspace. They have set up various websites which provide information concerning conflicts around the Muslim world and various other issues of concern among Muslims. In this respect,

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283 Syamsul Rijal, "Media and Islamism in Post-New Order Indonesia: The Case of Sabili," unpublished MA Thesis (Jakarta: IIS Program Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, 2005).

284 On the recent trend of publication of Islamic books, see Abdullah Fadjar et al, *Khasanah Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: The Habibie Center, 2006). In addition to those by Indonesian Islamists—Adian Husaini, Ramly Nawawi, Abu Deedat Syihabuddin, Nuim Hidayat, Hartono Ahmad Jaiz, Muslim Nasution, and Anis Matta, among other writers—there are translations of the works originally written in Arabic by well-known Islamist ideologues such as Hasan al-Banna, Sa'id Hawwa, and Muhammad al-Qahthany.

285 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah's Publishing Industry," *Asia Report* no. 147 (28 February 2008).

the Internet appears to be a space for the militant Islamists to develop roots and propagate their jihadist discourse in Indonesia and abroad. Utilizing the Internet, the pamphlets produced to glorify their thoughts and activities can instantly reach readers scattered across Southeast Asia countries where Islamist networks have been established. The Internet also serves as an interactive channel linking the militant Islamists and people all over the region.

Nevertheless, the Islamist media is not unified, but rather fragmented. Like the Islamist movements themselves, they have been engaged in the competition for the leading position on the discursive map of Indonesian Islam. Multiple actors offer different interpretations and meanings. Debates and controversies frequently erupt out of this competition especially over the prerogatives to define boundaries and interpret religious symbols and doctrines.

A good example of the competition among the different Islamist media is the recent controversy over the meaning of Salafis and terrorists triggered by the publication of Imam Samudra's book, *Aku Melawan Teroris*, in which the author claims himself as the only truly Salafi committed to defend Islam from the attacks of what he calls "the real international terrorist, America." By implication, Samudra accuses the other Salafis, including veterans of the Laskar Jihad, of only pretending to be the Salafis. In response to this book, prominent figures among the Salafis published a dozen pamphlets and books. Abu Hamzah Yusuf, for instance, has written a pamphlet, published on the Internet and titled *Membongkar Pemikiran Sang Begawan Teroris* (Uncover the Thoughts of the Terrorist Mastermind), in which he criticizes Samudra of having dishonored the truly Salafi authorities and idolized dubious figures, such as al-Hawali, al-Awdah, bin Laden, Sungkar and Ba'asyir.[286]

Lukman Ba'abduh, the vice-commander of the Laskar Jihad during its operation in the Moluccas, went a step further by publishing a book entitled *Mereka Adalah Terroris* (They Are Indeed Terrorists).[287] In this book, he condemns bin Laden as a *Khariji* who destroyed Islam by spreading the doctrine of *takfir* and perpetrating terror. Ba'abduh also criticizes Samudra and his cohort as deviant Muslims who too easily applied the *takfir* doctrine to legitimate rulers and even Muslims with whom they differ, resulting not only in widespread animosity against non-Muslims and Muslims alike, but also violence and terror in the name of jihad. Ba'abduh strongly condemns Samudra's claim to be a grand hero fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and Mullah Omar against the "greatest terrorist," America. In Ba'abduh's opinion, these Islamists are all fake *mujahidin* who have deviated from the Salafi method (*manhaj*).

Taking the commotion around this issue into account, there are some reasons to doubt that jihadists are able to withstand and survive intact a prolonged internal and external war of attrition. They have been involved in conflicts of interest which disrupt the cohesiveness of their struggle to realize their dream of enforcing the *shari'a* and establishing an Islamic state. Consequently, without one structural command and centralized umbrella organization which provides readily available sources of labor, efficient decision-making structures and a high degree of combat readiness, jihadi Islam apparently remains on the political periphery and may never succeed in changing Indonesia's strategic landscape. In fact, the multiple internal conflicts among jihadists call into question the very functioning of the jihadist enterprise. Like al Qaeda, competitions and

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286 Abu Hamzah Yusuf, "Membongkar Pemikiran Sang Begawan Teroris," www.salafy.or.id/ print.php?id_artikel=878.

287 Lukman Ba'abduh, *Sebuah Tinjauan Syari'at Mereka Adalah Teroris, Bantahan terhadap Buku "Aku Melawan Teroris"* (Malang: Pustaka Qaulan Sadida, 2005).

conflicts among jihadists will ultimately prove to be the decisive factor in determining the future of their very existence and their affiliated networks in Indonesia.[288]

Conclusion

Indonesia has become increasingly infused with transnational Islamist discourse and activism emerging from the pan-Islamic awakening and global jihadism. The rise of Saudi Arabia as the main player in the global politics of the Muslim world changed the patterns of global interactions and exchanges in Muslim politics. Saudi Arabia's export of Wahhabism to protect its realm and promote its interests facilitated the efflorescence of transnational Islamist movements in Indonesia that emphasize the call for a return to the *shari'a* and the Islamic caliphate. Drawing their inspiration from the thoughts of prominent Islamist ideologues such as Hasan al-Banna, Abul A'la al-Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, Islamists emphasize the need to apply Islam in all walks of life. This is believed to be the only solution to the various crises that have afflicted the Muslim community (*umma*).

Keeping pace with the widespread influence of the transnational Islamist movements, the zeal of militancy and resistance against the Suharto regime grew among youths, resulting in a number of uprisings in the name of Islam. The Iranian revolution further fueled the zeal of the resistance. The change in state-Islam relationships in the late 1980s, when the New Order regime introduced an accommodative policy towards Islam, provided a remarkable boost to the proliferation of transnational Islamist discourse and activism. Thus, as this paper shows, any determination of the impact of global Islamic interactions must first take into account their intersection with the dynamics of Islam vis-à-vis the Indonesian state at the local level.

The collapse of Suharto's regime in Indonesia served as a catalyst that allowed various groups and interests to register themselves and demand greater acceptance. A dozen transnational Islamist groups arose to negotiate and contest the new space created in the post-New Order Indonesian public sphere. The most radical among the groups—including FPI, HTI, LJ, MMI and JI—rejected the existing system and instead called for jihad in various trouble spots throughout the country that had been afflicted by bloody communal conflicts between Muslims and Christians.

The presence of these radical groups in the conflict areas had primarily a symbolic meaning, demonstrating these groups' concern with the fate of their Muslim brothers under the threat of the Christians, and thus, reinforced their status as the most committed defenders of Islam. The radical and militant groups' success waging jihad in those trouble spots paralleled the phenomenal development of the Islamist media after Suharto, which played a crucial role in disseminating propaganda and directing public opinion.

Apart from their contribution—both to spur the zeal of retaliation among local Muslims in their conflict with Christians and to provide an aura of righteousness and jihad to their struggle—the scope of the groups' ideological influence remains limited. They only succeeded to convince a small group of young militants to join in their activism and secret cells that they had built. In tandem with the democratic consolidation process occurring over the last decade, the room for maneuver available for such groups has narrowed. The police have succeeded to uncover various terrorist groups having a link with the JI network.

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[288] Fawaz Gerges, "Assessing Al-Qaeda Performance and Threat," in MUIS, *Strategic, Political and Social Perspective on Radical Ideologies* (Singapore: MUIS, 2006).

The fading influence of the militant Islamist groups in the Indonesian public sphere as a result of the democratic consolidation and the global war on terror has forced the militant actors to shift their strategy of activism towards Islamization from below through outreach activities at the grassroots level.

Transnational jihadism in Indonesia has constantly shifted and transformed along with the changes taking place both at the global and local levels. In terms of their organizational structures, the transnational Islamist groups have generally been broken; their leaders and members, in general, have become mired in internal debates and conflicts. However, as social movements, embedded in interpersonal networks and informal nodes of activism, they retain deep roots and a long vision of establishing an Islamic state. Some of the main actors in the groups have sought to consolidate themselves by fanning the flames of new sensitive issues, such as the issue of the Ahmadiyah. But, to accomplish their goals, these groups will not only have to confront the Indonesian government, but also the pro-democracy Muslim alliances that firmly reject jihadist Islam.

The only remaining hope for the militant jihadist groups is the mushrooming of the *da'wa* groups which designate youth as the main target while adopting an accommodative strategy to Islamize society at the individual levels. Although the presence of such groups seemingly delegitimizes the jihadists' struggle to enforce the *shari'a* and establish an Islamic state, their growing influence among youths has no doubt broadened the Islamist constituences that can potentialy be drawn into the jihadist orbits. This is specially so if the state and civil society forces fail to demonstrate their commitment for good governance and accountability and systematically campaign for democracy and human rights.

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Transnational Islam in Malaysia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper explores the diverse ways in which transnational Islam—and, in particular, the connection of Malaysia's independent, non-state Islamist movements to transnational Islam—impacts Malaysia's socio-political terrain. The paper gives particular attention to Malaysia's key broad-based ideological, Sufi-pietist and radical-militant Islamist movements, assessing their transnational affiliations and influences. The paper argues that transnational Islam in Malaysia is more fluid and dynamic in its non-state configurations which are characterized by efficient organization, innovative techniques and a wide pool of potential transnational partners. Although Islamist movements have become more focused on Malaysian-oriented issues and discourses, none has denied the utility and need to retain their transnational dimensions.

MAIN FINDINGS

Malaysia enjoys a rich history of transnational contacts with the Islamic world, which has influenced the development of its indigenous culture and plural society. While Malay-Muslims lay more importance to their Islamic rather than Malaysian identity, they are comfortable living alongside people of other faiths. This successful negotiation, along with Malaysia's racial and religious diversity, has earned the "moderate" label for Malaysian Muslims. Islamism and rising Islamic consciousness, thus, do not necessarily foster radicalism or hostile ethnic relations in the country. Extensive transnational linkages have been a primary factor for the government's powerlessness to curb or effectively monitor Islamist activities in Malaysia. While all Islamist movements have traces of transnational and, in particular, Middle Eastern influences during their germinating phases, as Islamists gain experience through interactions with the state, they tend to gravitate toward more Malaysia-oriented positions. Radical-militant movements are new to Malaysia's Islamist scene, which has been almost devoid of militant insurrection on a realistic scale. However, the possibility of Islamism in Malaysia assuming a militant expression cannot be ruled out. The Malaysian state has been commended for its vigilance in tackling the root causes of terrorism so as to obviate such a possibility. Malaysia has pushed for multilateral cooperation among Southeast Asian countries in combating terrorism under the Kuala Lumpur-hosted Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The Malaysian government would do well to integrate the Islamists' transnational contacts into the mainstream. The government should not regard these transnational actors as a challenge to its ability to host foreign Islamic dignitaries who are often used to legitimize the state's brand of Islam and Islamization.
- Friendly foreign governments such as the United States would actually benefit the Malaysian government by helping to bring these transnational Islamists into the mainstream, rather than associating them with the terrorist threat.
- However, taking into account the strong anti-American sentiment in Malaysia, even among ruling elites, U.S. statements supporting the Malaysian government's policies on Islam and Islamists actually do more harm than good. Such open support divests the government and its policies of public legitimacy. U.S. support should thus remain covert.

The rising profile of Malaysia as a prosperously developing and yet fervently Islamic country necessitates a study of the dynamic interaction between its local political imperatives and transnational Islamic variables. Such a study reveals that transnational Islam forms an integral aspect of contemporary Islamism in Malaysia. In the era of the global "war on terror," however, official quarters discourage transnational influences in the country, cautioning against independently driven external channels and media. The only transnational nexus which can safely be flaunted without drawing suspicion or outright resistance is the economic network. This paper views transnational Islam in Malaysia from a wider perspective, with equally serious attention given to non-economic and non-governmental channels of transmission and exchange.

Although Malaysian Islamist movements have over the years become more focused on Malaysian-oriented issues and discourses, none has denied the utility and need to retain its transnational dimensions. Independent Islamist[289] groups involved in transnational Islam in Malaysia may be broadly categorized into broad-based ideological movements, Sufi-pietist movements and radical-militant Islamist movements. This paper elaborates on these groups and movements, foregrounding their transnational character. As the paper shows, the transnational linkages of these movements are strengthened by the transmission of ideas, finances, logistical support, and manpower.

After briefly discussing the historical currents of transnational Islam in Malaysia, this paper is divided into three main sections devoted to discussions of key Islamist groups within each of the categories outlined above. The paper first looks at the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM), the Congregation for Islamic Reform (JIM), and the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) as representatives of broad-based ideological movements. The paper then turns to analyses of the Jamaat Tabligh and Darul Arqam, Malaysia's leading Sufi-pietist movements. Taken together, the groups and movements of these first two categories constitute mainstream Islamism in Malaysia. The paper then focuses on the emergence of radical-militant movements in Malaysia, a relatively new phenomenon in the country, arising only over the past decade. The paper will examine the Mujahidin Group of Malaysia (KMM: *Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia*—sensationalized in Malaysia's state-controlled media as *Kumpulan Militan Malaysia*, or the Militant Group of Malaysia), and the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT). Following these discussions, the paper will present concluding remarks incorporating significant policy implications emerging from the paper's central findings.

Brief Historical Background

Since the establishment of Islam in Malaysia, Malays—the country's indigenous and predominantly Muslim ethnic group—have maintained transnational contacts with peoples of Middle Eastern, Chinese, Indian and European origins. Historical accounts of the colonial period indicate that the British worried about the subversive implications of excessive contacts between the Malay-Muslims and their Middle Eastern brethren emerging. Instances of contact occurred through the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Malay graduates returning from Middle Eastern institutions of higher learning, and the migrant Arab communities who had intermarried with

[289] Independent, or non-state, Islamism is understood here as sustained political action designed to establish Islam as the supreme creed of a polity and social order, while separately conceived and executed from any form of state-driven Islamization processes.

Malay-Muslims.[290] Pan-Islamist sentiments combined forces with Indonesian-imported anti-colonialism to produce the first stirrings of Malay nationalism, conceptualized around the ideals of a Greater Malaya (*Melayu-Raya*).[291] Among diehard Malay nationalists, enthusiasm for *Melayu-Raya* outlasted independence on August 31, 1957. Transnational Islam within the context of *Melayu-Raya* reached a crescendo with the 1965 arrest of opposition leaders from the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS: *Parti Islam SeMalaysia*) for their alleged involvement in a high-level conspiracy to set up a pro-Indonesian government-in-exile in Karachi, Pakistan.[292]

Since the establishment of Islam in Malaysia, Malays—the country's indigenous and predominantly Muslim ethnic group—have maintained transnational contacts with peoples of Middle Eastern, Chinese, Indian and European origins

At the official government level, prior to Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's premiership (1981-2003), Islam never occupied a pivotal role in Malaysia's foreign policy.[293] Afterwards, even as Islam seemed to assume an increasingly important position, as far as Malaysia's international relations are concerned, transnational Islam has served the ruling elites' domestic policy priorities more than their overtly religious concerns.[294] One of Dr. Mahathir's chief concerns was to appease, while not allowing the government's Islamic legitimacy to be lost to emergent independent Islamists, many of whom were galvanized by the new wave of global Islamic resurgence and harbored connections with the burgeoning Islamist movements of the 1970-80s. Such Islamists seemed to have upstaged the government even where the government was expected to be more magnanimous, for instance, in alleviating the plight of less fortunate Muslim minorities, refugees and liberation fighters abroad.[295] The following discussion of these independent Islamists, particularly their networks and trends in relation to transnational Islam, forms the major thread of this paper.

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290 Cf. William R. Roff, The Origins of *Malay Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 40-43; Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 26 (1967): 270-271; Abdul Kadir Haji Din, "Economic Implications of Moslem Pilgrimage from Malaysia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 4, no. 1 (1982): 60-63; William R. Roff, "The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Meaning for Southeast Asian Islam," in Raphael Israeli and Anthony H. Johns (eds.), *Islam in Asia (vol. II: Southeast and East Asia)* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1984), 239; Fred R. von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 4, 10, 15.

The prevailing impression in the Middle East, though, developed through centuries of inequitable interaction, is that Islam in Southeast Asia is popular and laden with indigenous accretions, in contrast with the scriptural and orthodox Islam of the Arabs. Such a lopsided view has been accentuated by the dearth of research institutes in the Middle East devoted to the study of Asia and Asians; see Mona Abaza, "More on the Shifting Worlds of Islam. The Middle East and Southeast Asia: A Troubled Relationship?" *The Muslim World* 97, no. 3 (2007): 419-436.

291 Radin Soenarno, "Malay Nationalism, 1896-1941," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 1, no. 1 (1960), 8-10; Roff, T*he Origins of Malay Nationalism*, 87-89.

292 PAS party president Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Helmy and vice-president Raja Abu Hanifah were held in detention without trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA). Dr. Burhanuddin, who died shortly after regaining his political freedom in 1969, strenuously denied these allegations of treachery, as recently exposed by his private notes during solitary confinement in 1965. See Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, *Hari-hari Aku Dizalimi* (Batu Caves: PAS Gombak, 2006). The official document outlining the alleged plot is appended in pages 122-151.

293 Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islam in Malaysia's Foreign Policy," *Hamdard Islamicus* XIII, no. 1 (1990): 3-13.

294 Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 5-11, 234, 270.

295 Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, 220.

Broad-Based Ideological Movements

In the Malaysian context, broad-based ideological movements may be run as either non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or political parties, but these movements are united by their invariable reference to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) and Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami for their sources of inspiration and doctrinal guidance.

Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM)

The first group within this rubric is the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM: *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia*), which was founded in 1971 and quickly established itself—by virtue of the size and composition of its support and the substantive causes it promoted—as the most credible Islamist NGO in the country.[296] ABIM's relationship with the Malaysian state has periodically shifted from being confrontational (1971-82); cooperative towards "problem-solving" (1982-91); involved as a "partner in nation building" (1991-97) and pressured for its pro-*Reformasi*[297] activism (1997-2005); to becoming pragmatically supportive of the state's agenda to safeguard Malay-Muslim hegemony within the context of the Federal Constitution (2005-present day).[298]

In the early 1970s, a significant number of ABIM's pioneers were postgraduates in the United Kingdom, where they forged close contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood diaspora, met and were counseled in person by the Jamaat-i Islami's founder, Abul ala al-Mawdudi, and organized circles to study these ideologues' thoughts.[299] From its outset, ABIM has operated on the twin principles of *dakwah* and *tarbiyyah*—understood as a systematic educational process to build up mankind towards perfecting their role in this world as commissioned by God.[300] In both aspects, influences of the Muslim Brotherhood and Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami are conspicuous. For example, ABIM recommends to its members the daily recitation of *al-ma'thurat*, a collection of Quranic verses and prayer formulae commissioned by Hassan al-Banna, founder-leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. Intellectual education in ABIM comprehensively utilizes literature written by scholars identified with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-i-Islami.[301] Such discipline is a regular feature of ABIM's *tamrin al-kadir* (cadre training) programs and *usrah* units.[302] In fact, today *usrah* is an established institution in official *dakwah* programs in Malaysian schools and institutions of higher learning.

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296 Judith Nagata, "The New Fundamentalism: Islam in Contemporary Malaysia," *Asian Thought and Society* 5, no. 14 (1980): 136; John Funston, "Malaysia" in Mohammed Ayoob (ed.), *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 175; Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia," *Asian Survey* 21, no. 10 (1981): 1045.

297 *Reformasi* refers to the movement for social and political reform which grew out of *ad hoc* street protests and demonstrations held in support of former ABIM president Anwar Ibrahim, who was unceremoniously sacked from his positions as deputy prime minister and deputy UMNO president in September 1998, and later convicted and jailed on charges of corruption and sexual misconduct. Initially marshaled by two civil society alliances, viz. the People's Democratic Scheme (GAGASAN: *Gagasan Demokrasi Rakyat*) and the Movement of Justice for Malaysians (GERAK: *Gerakan Keadilan Rakyat Malaysia*), *Reformasi* assumed tangible shape in 1999 with the establishment of the National Justice Party (KEADILAN: *Parti Keadilan Nasional*), which merged in 2003 with the People's Party of Malaysia (PRM: *Parti Rakyat Malaysia*) to form the People's Justice Party (PKR: *Parti Keadilan Rakyat*). Formally led since its inception by Anwar's wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, PKR has since the March 8 elections been the largest opposition party in Parliament.

298 Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Islamist Realignments and the Rebranding of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (2008): 225-232.

299 M. Kamal Hassan, "The Influence of Mawdudi's Thought on Muslims in Southeast Asia: A Brief Survey," *The Muslim World* 93, nos. 3-4 (2003): 432-434.

300 Mohammad Nor Monutty, *Perception of Social Change in Contemporary Malaysia: A Critical Analysis of ABIM's Role and its Impact Among Muslim Youth*, Ph.D. dissertation (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1989), 212, 231.

301 Mohammad Nor Monutty, *Perception of Social Change in Contemporary Malaysia*, 234-239.

302 *Usrah* is another concept borrowed from the Muslim Brotherhood which literally means "family" but technically refers to "a small unit comprised of five to twenty members headed by a leader known as the *naqib*, which meets weekly or once every two weeks to study and foster Islamic brotherhood among themselves." Mohammad Nor Monutty, *Perception of Social Change in Contemporary Malaysia*, 240.

ABIM's strength in transnational networking once caused shudders within official circles as to its supposed predilection for a revolutionary Islamic government. Anwar Ibrahim, ABIM's president from 1971-82, visited and was well-received by Khomeini's Iran and Zia ul-Haq's "fundamentalist" Pakistan, triggering ABIM to observe a "Solidarity Day" in conjunction with the liberation of Iran.[303] During 1980 and 1981, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO: *Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu*) General Assembly's vociferous attacks against groups "attempting to import the Iranian revolutionary ideology" were followed by specific demands by some delegates to proscribe ABIM altogether.[304] Also alleged to harbor links with Gadhaffi's Libya,[305] ABIM nevertheless denied receiving finance from abroad or being interested in transplanting a foreign model of Islamic government to Malaysia.[306]

Testifying to ABIM's international influence, Anwar Ibrahim was appointed as the Asia-Pacific representative of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and as an executive director of the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO).[307] Both WAMY and IIFSO were outgrowths of the Muslim Brotherhood's international network and enjoyed strong ties with the financially generous Saudi political establishment, which had capitalized on the network to spread its brand of Wahhabi Islam.[308] Under the auspices of WAMY and IIFSO, Malay translations of al-Mawdudi's books and similar foreign Islamist literature have been efficiently instituted and distributed throughout Malaysia for the benefit of the non-English speaking public.[309]

ABIM's strong commitment to transnational Islamic concerns is also reflected by the regularity of its open statements expressing solidarity with Islamic causes abroad, such as protests against atrocities committed against Muslims in Palestine, Bosnia, India, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.[310] In pursuing its international agenda, ABIM cooperates with local and foreign NGOs. ABIM is candid about its maintenance of continuing links with vectors of the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-i-Islami ideologies such as WAMY, the International Institute of Islamic Throught (IIIT), the Saudi-based Muslim World League (MWL: *Rabitah Al-Alam Islami*) and the Leicester-based Islamic Foundation.[311] ABIM leaders have constantly represented the Asian-Pacific region in IIFSO

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303 Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia," 1048; Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, 74.

304 Syed Ahmad Hussein, *Islam and Politics in Malaysia 1969-82: The Dynamics of Competing Traditions*, Ph.D. dissertation (New Haven: Yale University, 1988), 585-586.

305 Judith Nagata, "Religious Ideology and Social Change: The Islamic Revival in Malaysia," *Pacific Affairs* 53, no. 3 (1980), 430; Geoffrey C. Gunn, "Radical Islam in Southeast Asia: Rhetoric and Reality in the Middle Eastern Connection," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 16, no. 1 (1986): 41.

306 Funston, "Malaysia," 176.

307 Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia," 1048; M. Kamal Hassan, "The Influence of Mawdudi's Thought on Muslims in Southeast Asia," 432.

308 Zeyno Baran, "The Muslim Brotherhood's US Network," published February 27, 2008, http://www.futureofmuslimworld.com/research/pubID.81/pub_detail.asp (accessed July 27, 2008). The term Wahhabi is derived from the name of the reformer of Nejd in present-day Saudi Arabia, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1787), who struck a strategic alliance with a local warrior, Muhammad ibn Saud (d. 1765), in 1744. Tribal and religious forces thus united and expanded territories under their control to lay the basis for the first Saudi state. Wahhabi puritanism strove to cleanse the Islamic faith from *shirk* (idolatry) and *bid'a* (innovations), and equated heretical Muslims with belligerent infidels. Defeated by the Ottomans in 1819, the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance re-emerged in the 1820s, but was defeated again in 1891. The third Saudi state could be dated back to 1926, when Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud and a pro-Wahhabi group of warriors called the *Ikhwan* conquered the Hijaz. In 1932, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was proclaimed. For details, see Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam* (London: Faber and faber, 1982), 159-169.

309 M. Kamal Hassan, "The Influence of Mawdudi's Thought on Muslims in Southeast Asia," 432.

310 "Media statement on the 60th anniversary of the Nakba and the Palestinian Right of Return," http://www.abim.org.my/component/content/article/1-siaran-media/220-media-statement-on-the-60th-anniversary-of-the-nakba-and-the-palestinian-right-of-return.html (accessed July 27, 2008); Mohd Anuar Tahir, *Pendirian Politik ABIM* (Petaling Jaya: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 1993), 37-149.

311 "Jaringan Dakwah Antarabangsa," http://www.abim.org.my/profil-abim/aktiviti-antarabangsa.html (accessed July 27, 2008).

and WAMY conferences,[312] and ABIM admits to receiving financial contributions from WAMY through its Malaysian chapter.[313]

In maintaining transnational Islamist loyalties, ABIM has not been swayed by the fact that some of its transnational partners have been increasingly implicated in the West with the diffusion of militant Islamism which allegedly cultivates, if not downright supports, terrorism.[314] ABIM has carved a niche for itself in global Muslim charity work, not only by supporting efforts of international relief organizations such as the Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but also by initiating in 2001 Malaysia's Global Peace Mission (GPM), through which 76 NGOS cooperate in sending volunteers and relief workers to countries beleaguered by humanitarian crises.[315]

As GPM's de facto leader, ABIM has spearheaded NGO protests against the U.S.'s unilateral action and military incursions in pursuit of its global war on terror.[316] In 2006, GPM was appointed as the Commissioner of Humanity, Unity and Solidarity of the Union of NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW), an Istanbul-based umbrella body founded in December 2005 and which ABIM officially became a member of in December 2007. In recognition of its efforts which span over twenty countries, GPM has been appointed as a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Humanitarian Forum (OICHF).[317] Ahmad Azam Abdul Rahman, a former ABIM president, serves as GPM Chairman-cum-UNIW Chairman of the Commission of Social and Humanitarian Affairs and Solidarity.[318]

The Future Global Network (FGN) is yet another ABIM-affiliated NGO, headed by Ahmad Azam, and is dedicated to exalt Islam at the national and global level by harnessing intellectuals, professionals and social activists in a solid network of worldwide Muslim NGOs. FGN is involved in long-term alleviation of suffering Muslim minorities in Myanmar, the Philippines and Cambodia.[319]

Islamic Representative Council (IRC) and the Congregation for Islamic Reform (JIM)

The second Malaysian broad-based ideological movement involved in transnational Islam is the Congregation for Islamic Reform (JIM: *Jamaah Islah Malaysia*). JIM was legally registered in 1990 as an endeavor in "adapting the Muslim Brothers' ideas and perceptions of Islam to a

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312 Mohd Anuar Tahir, *Pendirian Politik* ABIM, 21-27.

313 "Kunjungan Hormat ABIM ke WAMY Malaysia," http://www.abim.org.my/component/content/article/22-laporan-a-berita-abim/237-kunjungan-hormat-abim-ke-wamy-malaysia.html (accessed July 27, 2008).

314 Dore Gold, "Saudi Arabia's Dubious Denials of Involvement in International Terrorism," *Jerusalem Viewpoints*, published October 1, 2003, http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp504.htm; Sean O'Neill, "British Islam colleges link to terrorism," *The Times*, published July 29, 2004, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article462977.ece; William A. Mayer and Beila Rabinowitz, "Florida Trail of Terror Part II – Al-Qaeda In Coral Gables," published August 8, 2005, http://www.militantislammonitor.org/article/id/925 (all accessed July 27, 2008).

315 "Bantuan Kemanusiaan," http://www.abim.org.my/profil-abim/aktiviti-antarabangsa.html (accessed July 27, 2008).

316 "An Open Letter to George W. Bush from Malaysia," published September 27, 2001, http://www.robert-fisk.com/letter_malaysia_sept27_2001.htm (accessed August 30, 2008).

317 "GPM Info," http://www.gpm.com.my/content/view/12/2/ (accessed July 27, 2008)

318 "ABIM 'Sah' diterima menganggotai the Union of NGOs of the Islamic World," http://www.abim.org.my/component/content/article/22-laporan-a-berita-abim/156-abim-qsahq-diterima-menganggotai-the-union-of-ngos-of-the-islamic-world.html (accessed July 27, 2008).

319 "Info FutureGlobalNetwork (FGN)," http://futureglobalnetwork.com/portal/content/view/12/26/; "Projek Rohingya," http://futureglobalnetwork.com/portal/content/blogcategory/19/40/; "Projek Bangsa Moro," http://futureglobalnetwork.com/portal/content/blogcategory/20/41/; "UNIW Fact Finding Mission to Cambodia," http://futureglobalnetwork.com/portal/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/; (all accessed July 27, 2008).

Malaysian setting."[320] JIM traces its origins to the Islamic Representative Council (IRC), which was founded in 1975 by Malaysian students in Brighton, United Kingdom. At their colleges and universities, these idealistic youngsters were quickly exposed to the Islamist doctrines of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-i-Islami, as propagated by the more mature Middle Eastern and South Asian research students and lecturers who dominated campus Islamic societies.

IRC was founded to make up for the marginalization of issues relevant to Malaysians in programs conducted by the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS), the parent organization of all registered Islamic societies in British universities and polytechnics. The emergence of IRC reflected the advent of a new breed of Islamists who rejected the moderate approach of the Malaysian Islamic Study Group (MISG), FOSIS's affiliate body among Malay-Muslim students. IRC's emphasis on organizational *tarbiyyah* via a secret-cell approach was attractive to fledgling minds who adopted a "black and white approach" through which society was perceived in terms of a hard-and-fast dichotomy between the Muslim and the infidel, the Islamist and the apostate.[321]

From its outset, IRC staked a claim to become the leader of Malaysia's Muslim students in the United Kingdom and their legitimate representative within the international Muslim community.[322] Attempting to contextualize and realize features of Middle Eastern and Indo-Pakistani Islamist trends to suit the Malaysian environment, IRC envisioned itself as a de facto Malaysian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, IRC was said to be frustrated by the Muslim Brotherhood's apparent recognition of ABIM, with which IRC had been historically entangled in a fierce rivalry for influence in student campuses.[323] As a significant number of its members assumed an academic career upon returning to Malaysia, IRC extended its influence to local universities, traditionally the domain of ABIM. Besides maintaining its stronghold in the United Kingdom, IRC enjoyed close links with Malay Islamic student organizations and the Muslim Brotherhood diaspora in the United States, Canada and Egypt.

But for all its Malaysian concerns, IRC's espousal of organizational secrecy echoed the worldview of Islamists in the Arab world, where the prevalence of a pervasive state security apparatus made clandestine operations a necessary feature of Islamic movements. In the 1980s, IRC activists pursued a strategy of penetrating into leadership positions of other Islamic movements to spark off change from within. But such a policy backfired when, upon disclosure by *bona fide* members of premeditated IRC-inspired conspiracies to transform their movements ideologically and methodologically, IRC members were effectively banished. For example, during PAS's 1987 General Assembly, its president reminded members to remain loyal to PAS's ideas and *modus operandi*, and to decline "extremist" trends as propagated by some "new" PAS members, meaning those associated with IRC.[324] In a spate of hostile publicity, PAS figures suspected of harboring links with IRC were subsequently defeated in their quest to wrest control of PAS's Youth Council and *tarbiyyah* committee, bringing about the effective "eclipse of the IRC within PAS." IRC retaliated by attacking PAS's supposed leanings towards Shiism and the Iranian regime.[325]

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320 Anne Sofie Roald, *Tarbiya: Education and Politics in Islamic Movements in Jordan and Malaysia* (Lund: Lund Studies in History of Religions, 1994), 279.

321 Zainah Anwar, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah among the Students* (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1987), 27-30.

322 "Zaid Kamaruddin, President of JIM," The Criteria (Kuala Lumpur), July 11-17, 2008.

323 K.S. Jomo and Ahmad Shabery Cheek, "Malaysia's Islamic Movements," in Joel S. Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah (eds.), *Fragmented Vision: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia* (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1992), 100.

324 Fadzillah bin Mohd Jamil, *The Reawakening of Islamic Consciousness in Malaysia* 1970-87, Ph.D thesis (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1988), 297.

325 Jomo and Ahmad Shabery Cheek, "Malaysia's Islamic Movements," 101.

Today, even among Islamist circles, the name "IRC" suffers from a past image associated with sinister and unsuccessful forays into the upper echelons of other organizations. The founding of JIM as an outlet for ex-IRC activists to contribute to society, and JIM's apparent openness in welcoming cooperative ventures with other NGOs and the government, was related to the failure of IRC's policy of infiltrating existing organizations.[326] But former IRC leaders reveal a host of other factors such as the realization that maintaining Middle Eastern-style secrecy was inappropriate and dangerous in light of the heavy government clampdown on NGOs in 1987; admission that the government had been successful in reducing the public appeal of *dakwah* movements by accommodating their demands; and the pre-occupation of activists with other professional concerns.[327]

Burdened with an IRC-tainted reputation as an elitist and exclusive organization,[328] JIM has sought to widen its public appeal through social reform initiatives in focal targets such as welfare and youth programs. Perceiving itself as a "social and *dakwah* organization," JIM proclaims to believe in a concerted effort of guiding society towards Islam, rejecting the monopoly of socio-religious power by "any one group or faction."[329] Its *tarbiyyah* programs are now tailored towards achieving specific focal targets for a designated timeline, with due consideration given to the critical national issues of the day. In 2006, JIM's president, Zaid Kamaruddin, declared the organization's vision as "developing a Malaysian state which fully implements the Islamic sharia by 2020."[330] JIM's strategic Four-Year Plans have therefore been designed to accomplish avowed targets, with "external influence, international society and Islamist movements" occupying a distant final position in its set of priorities.[331]

JIM's conscious decision to reorient its struggle towards a Malaysian direction does not mean it has disavowed transnational Islam. In fact, JIM's roots in the overseas-based IRC have given it strength in international networking. For instance, the prolific Malay-language writings of former JIM president, Saari Sungib, meant for use in *usrah* circles, have been acknowledged as instrumental in transmitting the ideas of Abul ala al-Mawdudi and Muslim Brotherhood ideologues to Malaysian Islamists.[332] Subsequent JIM presidents have highlighted international Muslim and universal issues before settling down to discussing tasks and challenges confronting JIM within the national context.[333]

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326 Badlihisham Mohd Nasir, "Dakwah Gerakan Islam Tanahair: Sorotan Terhadap PAS, ABIM dan JIM," in *Dakwah Gerakan Islam Alaf Baru*, eds. Ahmad Redzuwan Mohd Yunus, Badlihisham Mohd Nasir and Berhanundin Abdullah, (Bangi: Jabatan Pengajian Dakwah dan Kepimpinan, Fakulti Pengajian Islam UKM, 2000), 17.

327 Interview with Saari Sungib, former IRC stalwart and JIM's founding president from 1990 to 1999, on February 6, 2008. An engineering graduate of Aston University and a Hull University MBA holder, Saari was detained twice under the ISA in 1998 and 2001 for alleged involvement in pro-*Reformasi* subversive activities. After leaving NGO-style activism, Saari twice lost general election contests in 1999 and 2004 under the KEADILAN banner, but was triumphantly elected as state assemblyman for the Hulu Kelang constituency in Selangor in March 2008, under the PAS ticket.

328 Roald, *Tarbiya*, 282.

329 Tuan Haji Saari bin Sungib, *Menggarap Kepemimpinan Abad 21: Ucapan Dasar Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional 1993 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia* (JIM) (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 1993), 36.

330 Zaid Kamaruddin, *Menggembleng Ummah Memperjuangkan Syariah: Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional ke-16 2006 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia* (JIM) (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2006), 15.

331 Zaid Kamaruddin, *Bersatu Menegak Syariah Menjamin Kesejahteraan Ummah: Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional ke-17 2007 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia* (JIM) (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2007), 16-18.

332 M. Kamal Hassan, "The Influence of Mawdudi's Thought on Muslims in Southeast Asia," 438.

333 Mohamed Hatta Shaharom, *Meneguh Misi Islah: Mengangkat Maruah Ummah: Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional (PPN) ke-12 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) Anjung Rahmat, Jalan Gombak, Kuala Lumpur 26-27 Syaaban 1423, 2-3 November 2002* (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2003), 46-54; Mohamed Hatta Shaharom, *Berkeyakinan Memimpin Perubahan, Beriltizam Menangani Cabaran: Ucapan Dasar Presiden Perhimpunan Perwakilan Nasional (PPN) ke-13 Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) Kuala Terengganu 3-4 Zulkaedah 1424, 27-28 Disember 2003* (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2003), 3-15; Zaid Kamaruddin, *Menggembleng Ummah Memperjuangkan Syariah*, 1-6.

In operational terms, JIM's transnational activities are conducted via JIM International, established in 1999 as one of its eighteen committees. JIM International professes two objectives: to serve as a channel for Malaysian Muslims to express solidarity with worldwide Islamic struggles, and to show empathy with Muslims befallen with misfortune.[334] It has cooperated with foreign Muslim NGOs in organizing youth and welfare programs in Singapore, Cambodia, Ambon in Indonesia and Mindanao in the Philippines, and has sponsored poor foreign Muslim students at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM).[335] JIM sent representatives to join various humanitarian efforts conducted under the auspices of other NGOs such as the Malaysian Medical Relief Society (MERCY Malaysia), for example, to Kosova in 1999 and Afghanistan in 2001.[336]

Recent oppression against Palestinians has prodded JIM International into focusing attention on the Palestinian question. It has organized widespread campaigns to increase awareness of the plight of Palestinians, doubling up as fund-raising ventures. In fighting for the Palestinian cause, JIM International's networking links stretch to NGOs in the United Kingdom, Lebanon and Kuwait.[337] It has hosted prominent activists such as the United Kingdom-based Palestinian academic Dr. Azzam Tamimi who has aroused disquiet in the West for his alleged support of the militant Islamic resistance movement, HAMAS (*Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*).[338]

For that matter, in 2001 JIM was briefly embroiled in a controversy over its alleged links with clandestine cells of the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM), which in turn was touted to have liaisons and overlapping membership with the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the Southeast Asian regional terrorist network.[339] In large measure today, JIM has managed to shrug off attempts to associate it with militancy, testifying to the success of its post-IRC socialization programs with grassroots Malay-Muslims and other NGOs. However, there is no guarantee that such allegations will not recur, bearing in mind JIM's IRC past and continuing transnational bonds with influential foreign Islamists.

Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS)

The third Malaysian broad-based ideological movement with considerable transnational Islamist links, the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS: *Parti Islam SeMalaysia*), owes its origins to a breakaway conference held by UMNO's *ulama* section on November 24, 1951 in Butterworth, Penang. In its formative phase, PAS's ideology amalgamated Islamist principles of the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-i-Islami, with welfare state doctrines of the Council of Muslim Organizations (*Masjumi*) Party in Indonesia. Insofar as PAS's external policies are concerned, its pan-Islamist leanings do not and have never reached the extent of advocating the restoration of a global caliphate which

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334 "JIM International," http://www.jim.org.my/institusi/international.php (accessed July 28, 2008).

335 Maszlee Malik, "Sekilas Usaha JIM Dalam Menangani Isu Palestin," in Ahmad Jamali Sepihie, WM Zukri CM Zin, Endok Sempo Mohd Tahir and Mohamed Hatta Shaharom (eds.), *Pemusatan Dakwah Pengislah Dinamika Ummah: Risalah Pemimpin Jilid 5* (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2004), 111-112.

336 Mohamed Hatta Shaharom, "Pelayaran Seorang Nakhoda: Tahun Ke-3 Sebagai Presiden JIM," in Mohamed Hatta Shaharom and Ahmad Sodikin Kassim (eds.), *Risalah Pemimpin Siri 3* (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 2002), 2.

337 Maszlee Malik, "Sekilas Usaha JIM Dalam Menangani Isu Palestin," 112-120.

338 Azahari Abdul Kadir, "Kembara Palestin," in Mohamed Hatta Shaharom and Ahmad Sodikin Kassim (eds.), Risalah Pemimpin Siri 3, 84-92; Sean O'Neill, "British Islam colleges link to terrorism"; Adam Pashut, "Dr. 'Azzam Al-Tamimi: A Political-Ideological Brief," published February 19, 2004, http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=ia&ID=IA16304#_edn5 (accessed July 28, 2008).

339 "Gerakan jihad: JIM nafi dakwaan Naib Canselor UUM," *Utusan Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur), August 29, 2001; Zachary Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24, no. 3 (2002): 453.

transcends the boundaries of modern nation-states.[340] Capturing political power within Malaysia's democratic political system has always been its utmost priority.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 had a profound impact in ideologically transforming PAS from a Malay nationalist party with Islamic aspirations to a national Islamist actor with important transnational dimensions.[341] As youngsters formerly aligned with ABIM and IRC flocked to PAS in the wake of PAS's withdrawal from the ruling National Front (BN: *Barisan Nasional*) coalition, PAS asserted demands for a juridical Islamic state, and remodeled its discourse with political vocabulary in line with contemporary trends in global Islamism, for example, depicting itself as the voice of the *mustazaffin* (oppressed masses) against the *mustakbirin* (oppressors).[342]

In 1983, arch-nationalist Mohamad Asri Muda was deposed as president in favor of Haji Yusuf Rawa, a former diplomat with vast international experience including a stint as Malaysian ambassador to Iran.[343] Henceforth, PAS experienced its biggest structural transformation with the inauguration of the *ulama* leadership, as embodied in the establishment of a *Majlis Shura al-Ulama* (*Ulama* Consultative Council), consisting of twelve religious scholars and headed by a *Murshid al-'Am* (General Guide). Despite the continual existence of the presidential office and the Central Executive Committee (CEC), the *Majlis Shura al-Ulama* now controlled ultimate decision-making.[344]

The *ulama*-led PAS has revived the importance of transnational Islam in its discourse, though not to the extent of displacing the primacy of realizing an Islamic polity in Malaysia. A scrutiny of keynote addresses by PAS presidents Haji Yusuf Rawa and Fadzil Noor (1989-2002) shows that international issues have consistently been high on PAS's agenda since the ascendancy of Middle Eastern-trained *ulama* to the helm of the party.[345] In Parliament, PAS legislative members have constantly voiced concern for the plight of dispossessed Muslim minorities and

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340 Erica Miller, *Democratic Islamists? A Case Study on the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS)*, M.A. in Law and Diplomacy thesis (Medford: Fletcher School, Tufts University, 2006), 66.

341 Farish A. Noor, "Blood, Sweat and Jihad: The Radicalization of the Political Discourse of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) from 1982 Onwards," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 25, no. 2 (2003): 200-232; Jan Stark, "The Islamic debate in Malaysia: the unfinished project," *South East Asia Research* 11, no. 2 (2003): 184.

Charges of Iranian interference in Malaysian politics reached new heights during the government's coercive operations against PAS in the mid-1980s. For example, in the Memali tragedy of November 1985, police stormed upon a community of PAS villagers resisting the arrest of their leader, Ibrahim Mahmood who was accused of abusing Islam and inciting rebellion against the state. Four policemen and fourteen villagers including Ibrahim lost their lives. The official version of events traced police operations, including previously abortive ones, to provocative preparations made by the Libyan-educated Ibrahim to topple the government via a clandestine Islamic Revolutionary Movement which drew inspiration from similar movements in the Middle East. See Government of Malaysia, Kertas Perintah 21 Tahun 1986: The Memali Incident (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Home Affairs, 1986), 12; and Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, Islam and Violence in Malaysia, RSIS working paper no. 124 (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2007), 11-14.

PAS-sponsored schools were reported to have sent their graduates to Iran for further education (Suhaini Aznam, "Fundamentalism on trial," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong), May 8, 1986). Former president Mohamad Asri claimed that Ayatollah Khomeini had appointed a leading PAS figure as his emissary in Southeast Asia (Nair, Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy, 135-136).

PAS's enthusiasm for Iran, however, was short-lived as excesses of post-revolutionary Iran became difficult to bear for the staunchly Sunni Malay-Muslims. Although Haji Yusuf Rawa's leadership (1983-89) witnessed the Iranian revolution leaving an indelible imprint on PAS in the form of an ulama leadership, he was reported to have advised rank-and-file PAS members to limit their emulation of Iranians to their revolutionary spirit in fighting oppressive rule, minus their sectarian beliefs (Saari Sungib, 5 Tokoh Gerakan Islam Malaysia, 73, 81).

342 Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, 85-86; Jomo Kwame Sundaram and Ahmed Shabery Cheek, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988): 862; Farish A. Noor, *Islam Embedded: The Historical Development of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party PAS (1951-2003) Volume 2* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 2004), 329-336, 355.

343 Saari Sungib, 5 Tokoh Gerakan Islam Malaysia (Batu Caves: PAS Gombak, 2005), 73, 82-83.

344 The background, causes, drama and immediate impact of PAS's 1982-83 leadership crisis and organizational revamp are detailed in Hussin Mutalib, Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics, 109-114, 118-125. For a more succinct account, see Jan Stark, "Constructing an Islamic Model in Two Malaysian States: PAS Rule in Kelantan and Terengganu," *Sojourn* 19, no. 1 (2004): 52-56.

345 Cf. Haji Yusof Rawa, "Bertindak menentang Kezaliman," and "Bertekad Membulatkan Jemaah," in Haji Yusof Rawa and Ustaz Haji Fadzil Mohd Noor, *Membina Ketahanan Ummah: Koleksi Ucapan Dasar Muktamar Tahunan Parti Islam SeMalaysia* (PAS) 1983-1994 (Kepala Batas: Dewan Muslimat, 1995), 118-124, 215-222; Ustaz Haji Fadzil Mohd Noor, "Bersatu Menegakkan Islam," and "Meroboh Rangkaian Penindas" in Haji Yusof Rawa and Ustaz Haji Fadzil Mohd Noor, *Membina Ketahanan Ummah*, 319-329, 350-350.

urged diplomatic action against offending governments.[346] In support of the Palestinian cause, PAS has vehemently opposed any semblance of compromising with Israel's position as an illegal Jewish state, as when the government wanted to relax immigration restrictions to allow Israeli sportsmen to compete in Malaysia.[347]

In contrast with the government's official view, PAS's unswerving commitment to the Palestinian struggle was justified on religious grounds, thus drawing Islamist support to the party's events, such as a highly successful conference in 1989 to commemorate the first *intifadah* (uprising) in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[348] A year before, in 1988, a PAS-organized International Conference on Muslim Unity was well attended by Islamists from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Indonesia and Thailand.[349] Besides putting pressure on the government by claiming legitimacy in speaking up for transnational Muslim causes, PAS has also severely criticized the OIC for shirking its obligations to defend Muslims stricken with conflicts.[350]

In order to arrest the rising tide of support for PAS, a perennial government strategy has been to link the Islamist party to militancy and potential violence, a strategy allegedly justified by PAS's transnational links. Following the September 11 terrorist attacks (hereafter 9/11) and the American incursion into Afghanistan, PAS orchestrated anti-American demonstrations and supported Osama bin Laden and Afghanistan's Taliban government in its anti-Western rhetoric. PAS's anti-Western activities helped the government portray PAS as harboring a furtive fifth column agenda, thus alienating the party from non-Muslim Malaysians and the international community.[351] In 2003, the media created a furor out of PAS president's Haji Hadi Awang's presence at an Islamic congress in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia in October 2000, since participants at the congress had included prominent Indonesian militants such as JI mentor Abu Bakar Basyir and the JI-affiliated militia *Laskar Jundullah* leader Agus Dwikarna.[352] PAS retorted that Abdul Hadi had attended the congress upon invitations from Hasanuddin University and Indonesian NGOs in his capacity as Terengganu chief minister, and had merely spoken on the implementation of Islamic administration and laws in Terengganu and Kelantan.[353] Also not lost on the media were Haji Hadi's statements condoning suicide bombing in Palestine and supporting HAMAS.[354]

By 2001, PAS had all but cemented its transnational links with mainstream Islamist groups adhering to variants of the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-i-Islami ideologies. The liberalization of education in Malaysia in the 1990s enabled PAS scholars to establish private Islamic colleges

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346 Mohd Izani Mohd Zain, *Islam dan Demokrasi: Cabaran Politik Muslim Kontemporari di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2005), 166-170.

347 Mohd Izani Mohd Zain, *Islam dan Demokrasi*, 161-163; "Coalition of Malaysian Islamic Organisation for the Cause of Palestine. Sub: Stop the Entry of Israeli Footballers," published April 25, 2008, http://pas.org.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=643&Itemid=71 (accessed July 29, 2008).

348 Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy,* 220.

349 Noor, *Islam Embedded*, 436.

350 Miller, *Democratic Islamists?* 67.

351 Farish A. Noor, "Globalization, Resistance and the Discursive Politics of Terror, Post-September 11," in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.), *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), 165-170; Noor, *Islam Embedded*, 667-682.

352 "Kehadiran Hadi di Makassar bukti Pas cenderung keganasan," *Utusan Malaysia,* February 10, 2003; "Hadi boleh dikenakan tindakan undang-undang," *Utusan Malaysia*, February 11, 2003; Kumar Ramakrishna, "US Strategy in Southeast Asia: Counter-Terrorist or Counter-Terrorism?" in Kumar Ramakrishna and See Seng Tan (eds.), *After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies and World Scientific, 2003), 322.

353 PAS, *Ulasan Terkini… Tuan Guru Ab. Hadi Restui Pengganas?* (Tanjong Karang: Dewan Pemuda PAS, 2003).

354 Interview with Haji Hadi, "Kepimpinan yang mempunyai ketokohan dalam pelbagai aspek: PAS akan wujud profesional ulama," *Mingguan Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur), September 21, 2003; Miller, Democratic Islamists? 74-75.

operating sister degree programs with favored institutions in the Middle East.[355] Writings by PAS leaders legitimized power-sharing ventures with non-Islamist parties and demonstrated empathy with overseas Islamist compatriots who were similarly involved in endeavors to gain political power by legitimate democratic means.[356] To a certain extent, PAS's victory in Kelantan and Terengganu (1999-2004) inspired and set a benchmark for other Islamist parties residing outside Malaysia which sought advice from PAS, as when PAS president Haji Hadi Awang was invited as guest of honor to address the Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh.[357]

But with political power at the national level still elusive, PAS had also to learn from others. When the moderately Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP: *Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*) first rose to power in Turkey in November 2002, a PAS delegation paid a courtesy-cum-learning visit to AKP's leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan.[358] When again Erdogan triumphed in July 2007 with a rise in AKP's popular vote, PAS again congratulated AKP with the hope that it would "continue to lead the ummah in promoting goodwill and cooperation in enhancing the image of Islam and the Muslims."[359] In July 2008, amidst the brouhaha regarding attempts to realize UMNO-PAS talks towards the possibility of forming a new pact to safeguard Malay-Muslim unity, it was rumored that PAS president Haji Hadi Awang left for London to seek advice from Muslim Brotherhood representatives there.[360] A month later, Muslim Brotherhood representative Dr. Amman Said from Jordan was guest of honor at PAS's 54th General Assembly.[361]

Sufi-Pietist Movements

The label "Sufi-pietist" refers here to movements which attach greater importance to personal faith and piety—whether at the personal or congregational level—in realizing the ideals of Islam as a comprehensive way of life. These movements tend to shun overt participation in party or NGO-style pressure group politics. Sufi-pietist movements influence politics in a more subtle and indirect way, although their attitudes to political and socio-economic change may vary over time. In the Malaysian context, two movements of this characterization stand out in importance—the Jamaat Tabligh and Darul Arqam. The apparently apolitical tendencies of the Jamaat Tabligh and Darul Arqam encouraged early reviewers of Islamic revival in Malaysia to variously describe the movements as puritanically fundamentalist, anti-materialist, fanatical, backward-looking, unduly faith-centered, uncritically traditional and prone to other-worldliness.[362]

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355 Farish A. Noor, *Islam Embedded*, 650.

356 Cf. Mustafa Ali, "The Islamic Movement and the Malaysian Experience," in Azzam Tamimi (ed.), *Power-Sharing Islam?* (London: Liberty for Muslim World Publications, 1993), 109-124; Abdul Hadi Awang, *Islam & Demokrasi* (Batu Caves: PTS Islamika, 2007), 168-171.

357 Farish A. Noor, *Islam Embedded*, 650.

358 Brendan Pereira, "PAS Gets Tips From Turkey on How to Win Elections," *Straits Times* (Singapore), December 5, 2002.

359 "MP's PAS congratulates AK Party," published July 25, 2007, http://mppas.wordpress.com/2007/07/25/mps-pas-congratulates-ak-party/ (accessed July 30, 2008).

360 Joceline Tan, "Hadi and Nik Aziz at odds over whether to leave Pakatan," *The Star* (Petaling Jaya), July 16, 2008. Such talks materialized only after UMNO's position as the dominant party in the BN became severely threatened by the coalition's loss of its two-thirds parliamentary majority and of five state governments in the general elections of March 2008.

361 Aniz Nazri, "Dr. Ammam Said suntik semangat kepada perwakilan ulama," published August 14, 2008, http://muktamar54.pas.org.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=50&Itemid=1 (accessed August 31, 2008); "Ban gambling and limit liquor outlets, urges ulama," *The Star*, August 15, 2008.

362 Cf. von der Mehden, "Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia," 173; Funston, "Malaysia," 179; Ameer Ali, "Islamic Revivalism in Harmony and Conflict: The Experience in Sri Lanka and Malaysia," *Asian Survey* 24, no. 3 (1984): 306-308; Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, 46; Jomo and Ahmad Shabery Cheek, "Malaysia's Islamic Movements," 81.

Jamaat Tabligh

Originating from the missionary work initiated by Maulana Mohammad Ilyas (1885-1944) among poverty-stricken Muslims in Mewat, India, in the 1920-30s,[363] the Jamaat Tabligh launched its maiden missionary expedition to Malaysia in 1952, led by Maulana Abdul Malik Madani who was specially dispatched from the movement's headquarters in Nizamuddin, India. Despite occasional interruptions, the Jamaat Tabligh steadily expanded in Malaysia, enjoying heavy support from the Indian-Muslim community based in Kuala Lumpur and Penang. In 1972, a conscious decision was taken by its elders to activate *tabligh* (proselytizing) among Malay-Muslims. Missionaries were sent to private religious schools and urban mosques, from where the Jamaat Tabligh's influence penetrated into the burgeoning student communities around national cities. The progress was such that by 1977, a seven-member consultative council which reported directly to Nizamuddin was formed to oversee the Jamaat Tabligh's activities in Malaysia, hitherto supervised by itinerant missionaries from India and Pakistan.

In April 1980, an international Jamaat Tabligh gathering in Kuala Lumpur witnessed the participation of six to eight thousand enthusiasts. Another gathering in November 1982 was attended by the worldwide *amir* (leader) of the Jamaat Tabligh, Maulana In'am al-Hassan al-Kandhalvi. The Jamaat Tabligh attained nationwide fame after two of its Malaysian activists were shot dead, having apparently been mistaken for Moro liberation guerrillas, by Philippine government soldiers in Marawi City, Mindanao in June 1987. Since 1993, the main center of the Jamaat Tabligh in Malaysia has been a mosque in Seri Petaling in Kuala Lumpur, specially erected with member funds, amounting to a total of RM 3 million.[364] Nagata estimated Jamaat Tabligh members in Peninsular Malaysia to number around 5,000, of which probably one-fifth were fully committed.[365]

Malaysian members of the Jamaat Tabligh depend wholly for guidance on literature produced by the movement's South Asian forefathers. Malay translations of such tracts and books are used to address *jamaats* (groups of JT members). The most important compendium, entitled *Tabligh Nisab* (The Fundamentals of the Mission), by Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalvi, Maulana Ilyas' nephew-cum-son-in-law, has been translated into Malay by Hafiz Ya'qoob Ansari and its publication simplified by having chapters on the different virtues of Islamic rituals published as separate volumes.[366]

In practical terms, Jamaat Tabligh members in Malaysia emulate the practice of their Indian forbearers of spending at least three days every month, forty days every year and four months in a lifetime outside their locality, traveling in specially dispatched missionary groups. Under the guidance of a selected *amir*, a group of about ten missionaries, making local mosques as their makeshift headquarters, conduct *gasht* (visits) to local Muslims on a door-to-door basis, explaining to them the essentials of the faith and inviting them to the mosque for further sessions of *ta'lim*

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363 For the genesis and early development of the Jamaat Tabligh in India, see S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Life and Mission of Maulana Mohammad Ilyas,* translated by Mohammad Asif Kidwai (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1983), 6-65.

364 For the history and development of the Jamaat Tabligh in Malaysia as outlined in these first two paragraphs, see Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia: Sejarah dan Aliran* (Kuala Lumpur and Penang: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and School of Distance Education, USM, 1998), 89-97; Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia: Sejarah Pemikiran Jama'at Tabligh dan Darul Arqam* (Shah Alam: Karisma Publications, 2007), 3-9.

365 Nagata, "Religious Ideology and Social Change: The Islamic Revival in Malaysia," 422. A statement by Dr. Abdul Hamid Othman, then deputy minister at the Prime Minister's Department, claims that no fewer than 5,000 civil servants and students were involved in the Jamaat Tabligh. "5,000 kakitangan kerajaan, pelajar terlibat Tabligh," *Utusan Malaysia*, March 14, 1992.

366 Roald, *Tarbiya*, 276; Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia*, 92, 101-102.

(imparting of knowledge) and *bayan* (lecture on the necessity and nature of the *tabligh* work). Such missionary tours form the lifeblood of the Jamaat Tabligh's organization and activities.

Despite carrying a negative image in traditional Malay neighborhoods and official quarters for allegedly aggressive missionary tactics, allegiance to Indo-Pakistani connections and neglect of families left behind during members' *tabligh* tours,[367] the Jamaat Tabligh has grown in popularity among the Malay intelligentsia, as shown by its capacity to recruit professionals and prominent civil servants such as Dato' Ismail Panjang Aris (d. 1987), former secretary of the National Council of Islamic Affairs.[368] However, according to other studies, the Jamaat Tabligh's restricted and "simple-minded" approach and activities have discouraged members from remaining with the movement.

Experimentation with the Jamaat Tabligh appears to be typical in the reawakening phase of young Malaysian Islamists, but there is a tendency for these individuals to gravitate towards movements such as ABIM and Darul Arqam which offer a more comprehensive ideological worldview and lifestyle. Research into the experience of Islamists not unusually reveals one's nostalgic recounting of a past time, albeit brief, spent as a Jamaat Tabligh activist.[369] Even Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad, the well-known founder-leader of Darul Arqam, was known to have brought his followers along a Jamaat Tabligh tour to Singapore before finalizing his movement's own operational principles.[370]

The Jamaat Tabligh's seemingly apolitical orientation, as derived from a literal concentration upon spiritual revitalization and missionary activities, has resulted in the Jamaat Tabligh being perceived by the establishment as an irritation which misrepresents Islam rather than as a political threat. Strident criticisms of the Jamaat Tabligh's allegedly retrogressive methods and practices have been forthcoming from ruling politicians such as the former information minister (2004-08) Zainuddin Maidin and the Islamic Center (*Pusat Islam*), the central arm of Islamic officialdom under the Islamic Affairs Division, Prime Minister's Department.[371] Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad once warned that the Jamaat Tabligh's activities, by focusing solely on worship, were detrimental to national aspirations.[372]

Clearly, in the developmentalist ethos of the Malaysian state, the Jamaat Tabligh is considered a misfit, and many Malay-Muslim political elites blame the movement's anachronistic Indian influence for this inability to keep up with modern times. The Jamaat Tabligh also suffers from criticism from fellow Islamists for its over-emphasis on a literally understood mode of *dakwah*, refusal to utilize modern technology and the imposition of Indo-Pakistani culture on its followers, as can be seen from the Jamaat Tabligh's marginalization of women in the movement's activities.

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367 Judith A. Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and their Roots* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 121.

368 Mohammad Nor Monutty, *Perception of Social Change in Contemporary Malaysia*, 133; Mohamad Abu Bakar, "External Influences on Contemporary Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia," 224.

369 Roald, *Tarbiya*, 278; Fadzillah bin Mohd Jamil, *The Reawakening of Islamic Consciousness in Malaysia 1970-87*, 186.

370 Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia*, 92-93; Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia*, 6

371 "Tiada bukti untuk haram Tabligh," *Berita Harian* (Kuala Lumpur), March 21, 1992; Zainuddin Maidin, "Gerakan Dakwah: Isu Yang Perlu Ditangani," in ABIM, *Gerakan Dakwah dan Orde Islam di Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 1993), 37. Since 1997, the Islamic Center has been elevated to its new role as the Islamic Advancement Department (JAKIM: *Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*), with wider functions.

372 "Reaksi Jabatan Perdana Menteri - Tabligh: Belum ada keputusan," *Berita Harian*, March 17, 1992.

Darul Arqam – Rufaqa' – Global Ikhwan

The second Sufi-pietist movement considered here, Darul Arqam, was founded as a study group by the religious teacher Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad in 1968. After a few years of shifting bases, in 1973, Ustaz Ashaari and his disciples pioneered Darul Arqam's first model Islamic village on a five-acre land in Sungai Penchala, a remote area twenty kilometers from its birthplace of Kuala Lumpur.[373] Ustaz Ashaari's penchant for transnational Islam lay in his Sufi worldview which does not attach importance to differentiation in terms of nationality, skin color or geographical borders.

As mentioned above, early in his Islamist career, Ustaz Ashaari led his followers in joining a Jamaat Tabligh tour to Singapore in a learning mission.[374] But he then apparently decided, in the manner of Sufi missionaries of olden days, that trade served as a more subtle and effective medium of *dakwah*. As demand for Darul Arqam products, services and publications rose in the 1980s, Darul Arqam swiftly expanded overseas, especially in Southeast Asia.[375] Transnationalism took a new tide in 1988 when, after encountering problems with the religious bureaucracy which had banned some of his controversial treatises, Ustaz Ashaari traveled abroad on a more or less permanent basis.[376]

By 1993, Darul Arqam had established thirty-seven communication centers in sixteen countries.[377] Through trade missions, Darul Arqam set up investment subsidiaries abroad.[378] On August 7–8, 1993, in Chiengmai, Thailand, in conjunction with Darul Arqam's First International Economic Conference, Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad inaugurated the formation of the conglomerate Al-Arqam Group of Companies (AGC), which consisted of twenty-two business sections. Darul Arqam declared that profits made by economic projects under the AGC would be "channeled towards social welfare service, financing….Darul Arqam's da'wa [sic] missions around the globe."[379]

Darul Arqam's well-documented transnational economic forays were by then becoming a source of attraction to Malay-Muslim business elites, whose New Economic Policy (NEP)-driven economic advancements had hitherto been very much assisted by the extent of their connectedness

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373 This new settlement served not only as a Sufi retreat towards personal salvation, but also as a base for socio-welfare services, economic projects, educational initiatives and medical facilities; see Mohd. Rom Al Hodri, "Liku-liku Perjuangan Awal," in Ustaz Yusuf Din (ed.), *Politik Dakwah* (Kuala Lumpur: Syeikh Publisher, 1992), 192–196.

374 Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia, 92-93; Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia, 6.

375 See the collection of reports from newspapers of these countries in Darul Arqam, *Al Arqam Dalam Media Antarabangsa* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerangan Al Arqam, 1989), 2-18, 26-102.

376 For Ustaz Ashaari's defense of his controversial theological beliefs, see Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad, *Berhati-hati Membuat Tuduhan* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerangan Al Arqam, 1989). For accounts of some of his post-1988 expeditions, see for example Mohd. Sayuti Omar, *Rahsia Ustaz Ashaari Terbongkar di Luar Negeri* (Kuala Lumpur: Prodescom, 1989); Mohamad Mahir Saidi, *Memoir Ilham dari Gua Nabi Ibrahim: Singkapan Minda Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad dalam Musafir* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Hikmah, 1992); Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad, *The West on the Brink of Death*, translated by Tajul Ariffin Abd. Rahman (London: Asoib International, 1992).

377 These countries include: Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Australia and New Zealand; see Darul Arqam, 25 *Tahun Perjuangan Abuya Syeikh Imam Ashaari Muhammad At Tamimi: 25 Years of the Struggle of Abuya Syeikh Imam Ashaari Muhammad At Tamimi* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Abuya, 1993), 41, 181.

378 For example: a restaurant and a tailor shop in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; an animal husbandry project in Ningxia, China; catering and perfume industries in Pakistan; a double-decker executive tourist coach in Thailand; a food packaging and distribution company in Singapore; and, in Indonesia, a private school in Pekan Baru; soya sauce and shoe factories in Tasek Malaya; and a hairdressing saloon, groceries and tailor shops in Jakarta and Medan. Darul Arqam, 25 *Tahun Perjuangan Abuya Syeikh Imam Ashaari Muhammad At Tamimi*, 198; Muhammad Syukri Salleh, "An Ethical Approach to Development: The Arqam Philosophy and Achievements," *Humanomics* 10, no. 1 (1994): 44.

379 Darul Arqam, 25 *Tahun Perjuangan Abuya Syeikh Imam Ashaari Muhammad At Tamimi*, supplement; Darul Arqam, *AGC: Al-Arqam Group of Companies* (Kuala Lumpur: Al-Arqam Information Department, 1993).

to ruling UMNO political circles.[380] Darul Arqam had reportedly tapped into influential elements within UMNO, thus potentially drawing Malay middle class support away from the party.[381] The government became increasingly alarmed by the rising tempo of Ustaz Ashaari's critique of the political establishment, authored from his peripatetic overseas bases but produced by Darul Arqam's homegrown publications arm.[382] He supplemented rebuke of politicians at home with open advice to foreign Muslim leaders.[383] Large sections of Darul Arqam publications were increasingly devoted to colorful coverage of overseas visits by Darul Arqam delegations and their meetings with journalists, intellectuals, government officials and political leaders from other countries.[384]

In mid-1994, the director of the Islamic Center publicly alleged that Darul Arqam had formed a 313-men "suicide squad," codenamed the "Badr army" and based in Bangkok, in its design to take over power in Malaysia through militant means.[385] Attacks against Darul Arqam thereafter proceeded to focus on its alleged deviation with respect to controversy surrounding the theological validity of its *tariqah* (Sufi path)—the *Aurad Muhammadiah*—and Darul Arqam's followers' conditional belief that the *Aurad*'s spiritual progenitor, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Al-Suhaimi, was in occultation in preparation for his installation as the Imam al-Mahdi—the promised messiah who would restore Islam to its former glory and implement universal justice.[386] In a transnational war of words, the Malaysian government sought for cooperation from the neighboring governments to help suppress Darul Arqam.[387]

Darul Arqam retaliated by breaking its media silence and vocally speaking out to foreign journalists.[388] From his overseas sanctuary, Ustaz Ashaari lambasted the "corrupt" Malaysian government and boldly challenged the prime minister to a "popularity" referendum.[389] On September 2, 1994, Ustaz Ashaari and a group of followers, having had their passports revoked by the Malaysian authorities, were apprehended by Thai police in Lampang, northern Thailand, and

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380 "Radical Chic: Islamic fringe groups gain influence among the elite," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 26, 1994. In the report "A Ban Against The 'Messiah,'" *Time* (New York), August 22, 1994, a Malay professional is quoted as praising Darul Arqam for having "managed to put into practice what Muslim business should be" without having "to lie or cheat."

381 Judith Nagata, "Alternative Models of Islamic Governance in Southeast Asia: Neo-Sufism and the Arqam Experiment in Malaysia," *Global Change, Peace and Security* 16, no. 2 (2004): 110; Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Islam, Weberism and Economic Development: An Adjunct to Nagata's Outline of the Arqam Experiment in Malaysia (1968-1994)," *Global Change, Peace and Security* 16, no. 2 (2004): 172.

382 Cf. Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad, *Perang Teluk: Islam Akan Kembali Gemilang* (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Syeikhul Arqam, 1991), chapters 5–6; Muhammad Syukri Salleh, "Islamic Change in Malaysia: The Politics of Unfavourable Responses," in Jean Debernadi, Gregory Forth and Sandra Niessen (eds.), *Managing Change in Southeast Asia: Local Identities, Global Connections* (Edmonton: Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies, 1995), 238; Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad, *Keadilan Menurut Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Hikmah, 1993), chapters 9, 14; Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad, *Meninjau Sistem Pemerintahan Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Hikmah, 1993), chapter 14; Abuya Syeikh Imam Ashaari Muhammad, *Assalamualaikum Dato' Seri PM: Surat-surat Kepada Perdana Menteri Malaysia (jawapan kepada tuduhan-tuduhan)* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Abuya, 1993), 88–92.

383 Darul Arqam, *Message from the East* (Kuala Lumpur: Bahagian Pengeluaran Minda Sheikhul Arqam, 1993), 29-34.

384 Ustaz Abdul Halim Abbas, *Meruntuh Berhala di Tiongkok* (London and Kuala Lumpur: Asoib International, 1992), *passim*; Abuya Syeikh Imam Ashaari Muhammad, *Presiden Soeharto Ikut Jadual Allah* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Abuya, 1993), 43–52, 69–84; Nagata, "Alternative Models of Islamic Governance in Southeast Asia," 109.

385 "Al-Arqam tubuh pasukan bersenjata," *Utusan Malaysia*, June 13, 1994; "Kerajaan pandang serius Tentera Badar," *Utusan Malaysia*, June 14, 1994.

386 These contentious doctrinal issues are discussed in detail in Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The Banning of Darul Arqam in Malaysia," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 39, no. 1 (2005): 87-128.

387 Michael Richardson, "Malaysia and Neighbors to Curb Sects," *International Herald Tribune* (New York), August 5, 1994.

388 Cf. "Target: Al-Arqam," *Asiaweek* (Hong Kong), July 20, 1994; "Malaysia: Holier than them," *The Economist* (London), July 23, 1994; "Mahathir opens high-risk crusade against Islamic sect," *Financial Times* (London), August 6–7, 1994; "Malaysian sect pays penalty of politics," *The Times* (London), August 8, 1994; "In the Name of Security," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 11, 1994; "A Ban Against The 'Messiah,'" *Time*, August 22, 1994; "Premier vs. Preacher," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* September 15, 1994; "Cult of the 'Father,'" *Newsweek* (New York), September 19, 1994; "Sect tries to turn away Malaysia PM's wrath: The prophetic dreams of," *The Independent* (London), October 4, 1994; "A Malay Plot? Or Just a Well-Meaning Commune," *The New York Times* (New York), October 10, 1994.

389 "Al-Arqam leader hits out at 'corrupt' Kuala Lumpur," *The Nation* (Bangkok), July 2, 1994; "Ashaari: Let's hold referendum," *New Sunday Times* (Kuala Lumpur), July 24, 1994.

handed over to the Malaysian police at the Thai-Malaysia border. Ustaz Ashaari was consequently detained without trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

Malaysia's overbearing treatment of Darul Arqam was roundly reproved by the Thai press, academics, human rights organizations and Muslim groups.[390] In Indonesia, the traditionalist *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU: Renaissance of *Ulama*) issued an opposite *fatwa* which theologically exonerated Darul Arqam from heterodoxy.[391] Until the official disbandment of Darul Arqam, following its detained leaders' forced repentance in front of members of the National *Fatwa* Council (NFC) on October 20, 1994, Brunei was the only other country to have instituted a national ban on it.[392]

Rufaqa'

In April 1997, the organizational remobilization of former Darul Arqam members took place with the founding of Rufaqa' Corporation, a private limited company with Ustaz Ashaari as its executive chairman and Bandar Country Homes, Rawang—a non-Muslim majority township in Selangor where Ustaz Ashaari had been residing under restrictive residence requirements since 1994—as its headquarters. Starting with the manufacturing and distribution of herbal-based health products, Rufaqa', capitalizing on Darul Arqam's well-known enterprising spirit and close-knit networks, quickly captured national and Southeast Asian markets.[393] Rufaqa' Corporation successfully spread its wings to Southeast Asia and the Middle East through Zumala Group, a joint-venture company between Rufaqa' Corporation and the Hawariyun Group of Companies, a conglomerate owned and operated by Darul Arqam members in Indonesia.[394]

By a similar mechanism, the Hawariyun Group of Companies, whose Jakarta-based economic activities are reputed to enjoy an average monthly sales value of between RM 250,000 and RM 1 million, has penetrated the Malaysian market via Zumala's retail outlets.[395] It is the phenomenally successful Hawariyun, subsequently renamed Rufaqa' Indonesia, that has been continually producing books promoting Ustaz Ashaari's messianic thought for distribution in Malaysia.[396] It was hardly surprising that in July 2000, the media flashed out headlines declaring Jakarta to be the new hub of activities in reviving Darul Arqam, prompting instant denials by Rufaqa' officials that it was linked in any way to the defunct Darul Arqam.[397]

In truth, Darul Arqam's adeptness in applying transnational Islam to encompass the economic and socio-welfare domains rendered the national ban on Darul Arqam practically ineffectual. During the immediate post-banning period, material and morale backing from its overseas chapters, all of which pledged loyalty to their Malaysian leadership, was instrumental

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390 Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Southeast Asian Response to the Clampdown on the Darul Arqam Movement in Malaysia, 1994-2000," *Islamic Studies* 45, no. 1 (2006): 103-105.

391 Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, *Keputusan Pengurus Besar Syuriyah Nahdatul Ulama Tentang Aqidah Darul Arqam* (Jakarta: Nahdatul Ulama, August 12, 1994).

392 Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Southeast Asian Response to the Clampdown on the Darul Arqam Movement in Malaysia," 111.

393 "Rufaqa' terkenal di seberang laut," *Utusan Malaysia*, February 8, 2000; Joceline Tan, "Former Al-Arqam redefines itself: The movement now concentrates on its business enterprises," *New Sunday Times*, April 30, 2000; "Setelah abuya memilih tobat," *Gatra* (Jakarta), nos. 2-3, December 6, 2003.

394 "Zumala tinjau pasaran baru di Asia Barat," *Berita Harian*, February 4, 2000.

395 "Zumala bentuk 14 rangkaian runcit,"*Utusan Malaysia*, February 3, 2000.

396 Cf. Abu Muhammad Atta, *Pemuda Bani Tamim Perintis Jalan Imam Mahdi Penyelamat* (Jakarta: Penerbit Giliran Timur, 1998); Taufik Mustafa, *Pengembaraan Sang Duta Halilintar Muhammad Jundullah: Sebuah Model Memperjuangkan Kasih Sayang* (Jakarta: Penerbit Giliran Timur, 2002); Dr. Ing. Abdurrahman R. Effendi and Dr. Ing. Gina Puspita, *Abuya Syeikh Imam Ashaari Muhammad At Tamimi: Diakah Mujaddid di Kurun Ini?* (Jakarta: Penerbit Giliran Timur, 2003).

397 "Jakarta markas Arqam," *Utusan Malaysia*, July 13, 2000; "Rufaqa' nafi ada kaitan Al-Arqam," *Berita Harian*, July 13, 2000.

in perpetuating Darul Arqam's nexuses and ideals in spite of the stringent surveillance on its former members in Malaysia. Darul Arqam's strategic use of transnational marriages between its Malaysian and non-Malaysian nationals, facilitated by the wide practice of polygamy among the Darul Arqam leadership,[398] meant that the immigration authorities were compelled to allow the strategic flow of former Darul Arqam members across international borders.

However, under the guise of transnational economies of scale, the expansion of Rufaqa' continued unabated, burgeoning by 2005 into a conglomerate boasting 500 to 700 outlets specializing in small and medium size industries (SMIs), covering operations in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, France and Germany.[399] In fact, so diversified and successful were Ustaz Ashaari's post-Darul Arqam business ventures that he was rumored to have reached millionaire status.[400] On October 25, 2004, his health having acutely deteriorated after ten years of virtual house arrest, Ustaz Ashaari was finally released while residing in Labuan, an island off the coast of Sabah in Borneo to where he had been banished since February 2002. Freedom was granted by the administration of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who had replaced Dr. Mahathir Mohamad as prime minister on October 31, 2003. In the early phases of Abdullah Badawi's era, Rufaqa' appeared to have arrived at some kind of peaceful *modus vivendi* with the government.[401]

Nonetheless, when some in Rufaqa' attempted to publicly resurrect transnational millenarianism ala Darul Arqam in 1994, it was deemed to have overstepped political boundaries. Khadijah Aam's[402] controversial hagiography, *Abuya Ashaari Muhammad Pemimpin Paling Ajaib di Zamannya* (Abuya Ashaari Muhammad, the Most Miraculous Leader of His Time) was auspiciously launched in Phuket, Thailand, after Malaysian authorities blocked attempts to launch it in Kuala Lumpur.[403] Some of Khadijah Aam's assertions in the book were politically sensitive—for instance, that her husband was worthy of the title of *mujaddid* (reformer) and *al-Fata at-Tamimi* (youth of Bani Tamim), who, according to prophetic *hadiths* (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad), would act as the forerunner to Imam al-Mahdi.[404] Malaysia was portrayed as the hub of a global movement which would climax with the handing over of political power from *al-Fata at-Tamimi* to Imam al-Mahdi, ushering in an unstoppable Islamization process which would include Muslim reclamation of Palestine from the Jews.[405]

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398 Nagata, "Alternative Models of Islamic Governance in Southeast Asia," 108. The practice of transnational marriages was among Darul Arqam's transnational empire-building strategy; see Ustaz Haji Abdul Halim Abbas, *Panduan Membina Empayar Islam di Asia Tenggara* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Hikmah, 1991), 30–33. For discussions on how Darul Arqam utilized polygamy towards accomplishing wider aims of the Islamic struggle, see Ustazah Khadijah Aam, *Manisnya Madu* (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Syeikhul Arqam, 1990); and Nur S. Biedyn Beseri, *Kahwin Cara Arqam* (Klang: Trans Medias Publications, 1992). Ustaz Ashaari himself, with four wives and close to forty children, has sons- and daughters-in-law who are nationals of Indonesia, Thailand and Saudi Arabia.

399 Ustaz Hj. Asaari Mohamad, *Nasihat Buatmu Bekas Kawan-kawan Lamaku dalam Arqam* (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2005), 62, 68; Ustazah Khadijah Aam, *Abuya Ashaari Muhammad Pemimpin Paling Ajaib di Zamannya* (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2006), 14, 126, 235; Rufaqa' Corporation Sdn. Bhd., *Bermula dari Zero, bermodalkan Tuhan* (Rawang, 2006).

400 "Kini Asaa'ri digelar jutawan: setelah 7 tahun pengharaman Al-Arqam," *Buletin Utama* (Kuala Lumpur), April 29-May 5, 2001; Tarmizi Mohd. Jam and Ann Wan Seng, "Ashaari dan Rufaqa' Corporation: Taikun Baru Selepas 7 Tahun Arqam Diharam," *Geletek* (Batu Caves), June 2001; Muhammad Syukri Salleh, "Perniagaan Gerakan-gerakan Islam di Malaysia," *Pemikir,* no. 31 (2003): 142-148, 156-158; "Banned Al-Arqam cult thriving under business umbrella," *Straits Times*, February 9, 2002.

401 For example, Ustaz Ashaari praised Abdullah's Islam Hadhari scheme as a "novel and prudent formula…. to make Malaysia and Malaysians truly excellent, glorious and distinctive," resembling his own vision of an Islamic society; see Mejar (B) Abu Dzar, *Islam Hadhari Menurut Ust. Hj Ashaari Muhammad* (Rawang: Penerbitan Minda Ikhwan, 2005), xi.

402 Khadijah Aam was Ustaz Ashaari's second wife who, together with her husband, had been detained under the ISA's restrictive regulations from 1994 to 2004.

403 Contents of the English version of the book are available at http://skygate.wordpress.com (accessed August 2, 2008).

404 For further details, see the discussion of Ustaz Ashaari's messianic thought in Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The Futuristic Thought of Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad of Malaysia," in Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi' (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 198-205.

405 Khadijah Aam, *Abuya Ashaari Muhammad Pemimpin Paling Ajaib di Zamannya*, 212-217.

State religious officials reacted by sporadically raiding the business premises of Rufaqa', confiscating paraphernalia which allegedly proved the organization's sinister intentions to revive Darul Arqam, arresting alleged ring-leaders and charging them in the *shari'a* court for subscribing to and propagating false Islamic doctrines.[406]

Global Ikhwan

Under sustained pressure in 2006-07 after many states had passed *fatwas* pronouncing the movement's heterodoxy, Rufaqa' directors de-registered the company and established an apparently new entity called Global Ikhwan, the new appellation reflecting the integral role that transnational Islam occupies in the restructured entity.[407] Global Ikhwan exploits economic connections that had been pioneered by Darul Arqam and bequeathed to Rufaqa'. Global Ikhwan hardly differs from Rufaqa' in its concerns, activities and relational networks. But living up to its name, Global Ikhwan has intensified links with business communities in the Middle East, as can be seen by the constant stream of foreign businessmen and traditional scholars who pay courtesy calls on the bed-ridden Ustaz Ashaari.[408] These business contacts thrive on similar doctrinal worldviews as conditioned by a curious synergy between Sufism, messianism and economic activism.[409]

Radical-Militant Movements

Radical-militant movements are new to Malaysia's Islamist scene, which has by far been almost devoid of the threat of militant insurrection on a realistic scale.[410] In the wake of 9/11 and the rise of worldwide terrorism, counterpoised by the U.S.-led global war on terror, the possibility of Islamism in Malaysia increasingly assuming a militant disposition, bearing in mind the country's transnational linkages, can never be totally ruled out. The Malaysian state has been commended for its extra vigilant attitude in tackling the root causes of terrorism so as to obviate such

Radical-militant movements are new to Malaysia's Islamist scene, which has by far been almost devoid of the threat of militant insurrection on a realistic scale.

406 "Banned Al-Arqam tries to get members, 100 arrested," *New Sunday Times*, November 26, 2006; "JAIS tahan dua pemimpin Rufaqa," *Berita Harian*, December 2, 2006; "JAIS tetap dakwa 16 pengikut Rufaqa," *Berita Harian*, January 5, 2007; "JAIS serbu markas Rufaqa, tiga ditahan," *Berita Harian*, March 2, 2007; "Dituduh cuba hidupkan Al-Arqam," *Harian Metro* (Kuala Lumpur), March 17, 2007.

407 "Rufaqa tukar nama kepada Global Ikhwan," *Utusan Malaysia*, July 6, 2008. Global Ikhwan's website can be accessed at http://ikhwantoday.com/ (accessed August 2, 2008).

408 For example, in July 2008, two *syeikh*s from the Tijaniyyah order visited and pledged allegiance to Ustaz Ashaari in Malaysia. Other *syeikhs* whom Ustaz Ashaari befriended whilst on his overseas sojourn in the 1980s, and whose followers continue to form delegations to pay courtesy visits to him are Syeikh Abdul Nasser Al-Husaini Al-Shadhili of Saudi Arabia, Syeikh Abdussalam Harras of Morocco, Syeikh Abdul Khalid Al-Syammar of Jordan, Syeikh Mahmud Effendi of Turkey, Syeikh Haydar Bas of Turkey and just deceased Syeikh Abd al-Jabbar of Iraq; see http://dijanjikan.wordpress.com/ (accessed August 29, 2008). Cf. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The Futuristic Thought of Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad of Malaysia," 205; Khadijah Aam, *Abuya Ashaari Muhammad Pemimpin Paling Ajaib di Zamannya*, 148-149.

409 Cf. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "New Trends of Islamic Resurgence in Contemporary Malaysia: Sufi-Revivalism, Messianism and Economic Activism," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 6, no. 3 (1999): 1-74.

410 Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, *Islam and Violence in Malaysia.*

a possibility.[411] With the United States maintaining close interest on the terrorist threat emanating from Southeast Asia,[412] and the inclusion of Malaysian groups in its terrorist watchlist,[413] Malaysia has prodded for multilateral cooperation among Southeast Asian countries in combating terrorism under the Kuala Lumpur-hosted Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT).

The two groups briefly discussed here as posing a possible radical-militant threat to Malaysia's democratic political order are the Mujahidin Group of Malaysia (KMM: *Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia*) and the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT: Party of Liberation).

Mujahidin Group of Malaysia (KMM)

In the case of KMM, whose cells were vanquished in a series of ISA arrests starting in August 2001, the purported leader was Nik Adli Nik Aziz, son of PAS's *Murshid al-'Am*-cum-Kelantan chief minister Nik Aziz Nik Mat. KMM was alleged to have launched attacks on a police station, on non-Muslim religious sites and assassinated Dr. Joe Fernandez, a Kedah BN state legislator notorious for his evangelizing activities among Malay-Muslim youths.[414] The Home Ministry traced KMM's antecedents to the bloody Memali affair of 1985.[415] PAS, nonetheless, disowned any connection with KMM, if it existed at all. PAS's mouthpiece, *Harakah*, ascribed the crackdown to a government attempt to garner American support for its campaign against nascent "Islamist militant" networks in Southeast Asia.[416] It is possible, however, that KMM elements existed in PAS without the PAS leadership's formal blessing or even knowledge.

As such, it has been claimed that KMM had the dual objectives of maintaining and protecting PAS's struggle for an Islamic state, besides the pan-Islamist agenda which it shares with its regional counterparts.[417] It has been further alleged that, in 1999, Nik Adli and a PAS official had together attended a JI-initiated meeting in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, which formed *Rabitatul Mujahidin*, a loose coalition of Southeast Asian militant groups.[418] Uniting these militants are the shared experience and camaraderie cultivated during their fight alongside the *mujahideen* against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan; indeed, KMM pioneers were invariably former Malay-Muslim volunteers of the Afghan liberation war.[419]

KMM's transnational linkages were said to extend to the JI terrorist network throughout Southeast Asia, with a particularly active presence during sectarian fights in post-Suharto

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411 "Britain hormati pendekatan Malaysia perangi keganasan," *Utusan Malaysia*, January 11, 2003; "Cara Malaysia perangi keganasan disokong," *Utusan Malaysia*, January 14, 2003; "AS puji Malaysia perangi keganasan," *Utusan Malaysia*, February 6, 2004.

412 "The elusive enemy: The second front in America's war on terror is yielding limited results," *The Economist*, August 1, 2002; "War on terror in Southeast Asia a potential minefield," *The Sun*, August 19, 2002; "Amerika sokong Howard-Rancangan Australia serang negara jiran dalam usaha buru pengganas," *Utusan Malaysia*, December 4, 2002; "AS sasar Asia Tenggara," *Utusan Malaysia*, June 5, 2004.

413 "KMM, JI dalam senarai pengganas Amerika," *Utusan Malaysia*, May 2, 2003.

414 "Anak Nik Aziz ditangkap: Disyaki antara tokoh terpenting Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia," *Mingguan Malaysia*, August 5, 2001.

415 "Anak Nik Aziz ketua Mujahidin Malaysia," *Utusan Malaysia*, August 9, 2001.

416 Noor, "Globalization, Resistance and the Discursive Politics of Terror, Post-September 11," 164; Noor, *Islam Embedded*, 664-665.

417 Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network," 445; Kamarulnizam Abdullah, "Understanding and Responding to the Threats of Muslim Militant Groups in Malaysia," in Kamarulzaman Askandar (ed.), *Understanding and Managing Militant Movements in Southeast Asia* (Penang: Southeast Asian Studies Conflict Network, 2005), 39-42.

418 Kumar Ramakrishna, "US Strategy in Southeast Asia," 322; Kumar Ramakrishna, "Delegitimizing Global Jihadi Ideology in Southeast Asia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 3 (2005): 359.

419 Zachary Abuza, "Al Qaeda in Southeast Asia: Exploring the Linkages," in Kumar Ramakrishna and See Seng Tan (eds.), *After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies and World Scientific, 2003), 136; David Childs, "In the Spotlight: Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)," http://www.cdi.org/program/issue/document.cfm?DocumentID=3109&IssueID=56&StartRow=1&ListRows=10&appendURL=&Orderby=DateLastUpdated&ProgramID=39&issueID=56, published August 12, 2005 (accessed August 30, 2008).

Indonesia.[420] KMM and JI's Malaysian chapter had interlocking membership and, through JI, KMM served as a conduit for Al Qaeda activity in Southeast Asia by, for example, setting up front companies for the transfer of funds and logistical support for terrorist operations.[421] However, claims have also arisen that KMM-JI connections were maintained by KMM's single-minded Selangor cell, based on independent liaisons between leaders on both sides.[422] Yet, it has to be admitted that KMM's and JI's visions and objectives do converge, even if execution of one movement's respective plans are not necessarily in sync with another's. As for now, KMM seems to have yet to recover from the Malaysian security apparatus's clampdown on the group in 2001.

The Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT)

The Hizb ut-Tahrir, a political party originally founded by the Palestinian jurist Taqiyuddin an-Nabhani in Jerusalem in 1953, made inroads into Malaysia in the mid-1990s through returning Malay-Muslim students from the United Kingdom, where they had been tremendously influenced by the HT's flourishing activities.[423] There have been many disputes on the extent of the HT's advocacy of violence and revolutionary overthrow of governments, but the HT is infamous worldwide for its radical disavowal of the nation-state, repudiation of democratic elections and intensely Pan-Islamist orientation. To the HT, Muslims must be liberated from the clutches of un-Islamic systems and laws, and the only way to achieve such emancipation is by restoring the global caliphate.

In Malaysia, the HT's ideological worldview is wholly determined by its Middle Eastern parent body although, for practical purposes, members maintain strong links with their British counterparts. The HT conceives itself as being involved in an intellectual struggle to convince the public of the necessity of disentangling themselves from Western-style institutions common in Malaysia. Since 2005, HT members have been especially active in university campuses and have made their presence felt through seminars, public demonstrations, a website with extensive transnational links,[424] and participation in online forums and publications. Their initial activities being conducted under the guise of front organizations such as the Network of Intellectuals of the Malay World (IKIN), HT members have attempted to register their party to no avail.

The HT's formative phase in Malaysia was monitored by the more developed HT Indonesia on behalf of the HT's central leadership. Its secretive nature means no membership statistics are readily available, but the number of participants at its functions varies from 300 to 2,000. Despite its still new presence on Malaysia's Islamist scene, the HT, by virtue of its total rejection of the status quo, has caused disquiet among both ruling and opposition party circles. Even Islamist actors such as PAS have come to regard it as a threat to their political future.[425]

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420 Childs, "In the Spotlight: Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)."

421 Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network," 453-454; Abuza, "Al Qaeda in Southeast Asia: Exploring the Linkages," 140-143.

422 Kamarulnizam Abdullah, "Understanding and Responding to the Threats of Muslim Militant Groups in Malaysia," 41.

423 HT remains an unexplored group as far as research on Malaysian Islamism is concerned. The following account draws heavily from a hitherto unpublished research manuscript by Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, "Reviving the Caliphate in Malaysia" (2008). Mohamed Nawab is an Associate Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore.

424 See http://www.mykhilafah.com/ (accessed August 30, 2008).

425 Cf. "Hizbut Tahrir mengancam PAS," published July 13, 2006, http://ummahonline.wordpress.com/2006/07/13/hizbut-tahrir-mengancam-pas/ (accessed August 30, 2008).

Concluding Remarks

Since its genesis as the common religion of the majority of Malaysian peoples, Islam in Malaysia has invariably exhibited vibrant transnational dimensions. In the modern, globalized age, the vectors of transnational Islamic connections have diversified in line with variegated advances in transportation and information and communications technology. Even as nation-states consolidate their hold over national populations, transnational Islamic contacts and movements are here to stay, though not necessarily predicated on religion per se. Within such diverse contexts, neither conventional typologies nor axiomatic presumptions necessarily hold. As such, other variables involved directly or indirectly with transnational Islam—whether individuals, governments, corporations or organizations, both public and private—need also to be prepared to adapt quickly so as not to be left behind by rapid developments within the world of transnational Islam and international Muslim relations.

In Malaysia, the picture is complicated by the porous boundaries between transnational Islam and mundane or cause-specific affairs, to the extent that transnational Islamic links unconsciously grow even if the *raison d'être* for such liaisons involves humanitarian, legal, economic and social considerations of the seemingly non-religious type. Moreover, it is very feasible that liaisons which initially began as religiously neutral assume religious coloring in the course of time in tandem with greater affinity and confluence of interests. As transnational Islam becomes perpetually embedded in the mindset and discourse of transnational Islamists, the once-familiar paradigm joining Islamic revival and the search for and safeguarding of Malay ethnic identity, put forward for instance by Nagata, Chandra Muzaffar and Hussin Mutalib,[426] needs to be re-evaluated and perhaps reformulated, though not necessarily revamped.

As a 2006 random survey of 1,000 Malay-Muslims across Peninsular Malaysia revealed, while Malay-Muslims of the "post-Islamic revival" generation tellingly lay more importance to their Islamic rather than Malaysian identity, they express no discomfort in living alongside people of other faiths. In fact, a large majority of them advocate the practices of inter-faith dialogue and of Muslims learning about other Malaysian religions.[427] It is this successful negotiation or their country's racial and religious diversity that explains the common description of Malaysian Muslims as "moderate."[428] Islamism and rising Islamic consciousness among the grassroots population is therefore not necessarily conducive to deteriorating ethnic relations.[429]

But in postulating a new tangential relationship between Islamism and ethnic relations, a caveat exists: how far is the successful negotiation sustainable in conditions of perceived dangers to, and eventual loss of, Malay-Muslim hegemony? This possibility has been consistently played out by the pro-BN mainstream media following the recent large electoral gains of the professedly multi-racial opposition *Pakatan Rakyat* (PR) coalition, led ironically by Malaysia's own Islamist-

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426 Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam;* Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia;* Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics*.

427 Patricia Martinez, "Opinion: Thumbs up to living in Malaysian diversity," *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), August 10, 2006.

428 Cf. Michael Backman, "A moderate voice for Islam: Malaysia's Mahathir," *International Herald Tribune*, December 6, 2002; Justin Raimondo, "Christmas in Malaysia: It's not what you imagine," published December 23, 2005, http://antiwar.com/justin/?articleid=8300 (accessed August 3, 2008).

429 In southern Thailand, by contrast, rising Islamism, even in the non-combative styles propagated by the Jamaat Tabligh and Darul Arqam, has had the opposite effect of widening the social gulf between Muslims and non-Muslims; see Alexander Horstmann, "The Revitalization of Islam in Southeast Asia: The Cases of Darul Arqam and Jemaat Tabligh," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2006): 88.

turned-reformist icon, Anwar Ibrahim.[430] The obvious intention of the political establishment is to instill fear among the Malay-Muslims and to awaken them to their vulnerability in the event of their losing protection of the UMNO, the long-standing defender of Malay supremacy (*ketuanan Melayu*).

Transnational Islam has been manifested in Malaysia in a variety of ways, conduits and configurations. The main transnational actors identified are the Islamist movements, with their dynamic forging of cross-border nexuses and alliances. In their practices of transnational Islam, it is impossible to separate external political dimensions from internal ramifications, and vice-versa. The ubiquitous ideal of transnational Islam is indeed appealing for Islamists of the post-modern generation, but beyond the rhetoric of a distant single caliphate as aspired to by the HT, many Islamists, Islamic thinkers and Muslim leaders have resigned to the fact that for practical purposes, the struggle for an Islamic polity has to start off and be situated for a reasonable amount of time within the context of nation-states.[431]

Due to fewer formal institutional restrictions and their own fluidity, Islamists in Malaysia have proven more effective than foreign ministry bureaucrats in the transnational Islamic realm. The Malaysian government would do well to tap into and integrate the Islamists' transnational contacts and linkages, rather than regarding them as a challenge to its own ability to host foreign Islamic dignitaries, who have so often been used just to legitimize the state's own brand of Islam and Islamization. Friendly foreign governments such as the United States would actually do a favor to the Malaysian government by extending covert support in bringing transnational Islamists into the mainstream, rather than associating independently-driven transnational Islam with the threat of terrorism. Along these lines, taking into account the strong anti-American sentiment in Malaysia, even among ruling elites, U.S. statements praising the Malaysian government's policies on Islam and Islamists actually do more harm than good. Such open support divests the government and its policies of public legitimacy. In light of these sentiments, U.S. support should remain covert.

The Malaysian government would do well to tap into and integrate the Islamists' transnational contacts and linkages, rather than regarding them as a challenge to its own ability to host foreign Islamic dignitaries, who have so often been used just to legitimize the state's own brand of Islam and Islamization.

All movements have had traces of transnational influences during their germinating phases. This

[430] See for example the discussion in Baradan Kuppusamy, "The Pressure Principle," *The Star,* July 23, 2008.

[431] James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1986), chapter 4.

was doubtless influenced by the center-periphery relationship which traditionally saw Malay-Muslims as dependent on their Middle Eastern brethren. However, as Islamists mature and gain experience from their varied interactions with the state, they develop a body of thought which fundamentally challenges the assumptions and direction of this center-periphery relationship. Hence, the reverberating calls for a *manhaj Malazi* (Malaysian approach) of actualizing Islam are reflected, for example, in the founding of JIM as a consequence of IRC activists' shedding their clandestine ways; in ABIM's recent predilection to defend the positions of Islam and Malay-Muslim constitutional rights, and to advocate the formation of a Malaysian nation;[432] and brought to the extreme in Ustaz Ashaari's discourse on Malay leadership of the *ummah*, which have quite unexpectedly drew approbation from Muslim intellectuals and foreign Islamists who continuously pay courtesy visits to him.

In other words, in their myriad patterns of thought, action and organization, Islamists in Malaysia have contributed to correcting the historical anomalies of a center-periphery relationship which had been unduly biased in favor of the Middle Eastern center.[433] While scholars have realized and lamented this bias for some time, they are incapable of instituting change. It is the Islamists, as the pivotal actors of transnational Islam in Malaysia, who serve as the true agents of change in their liaisons with their overseas counterparts.

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[432] In his keynote address to the 36th ABIM General Assembly in 2007, ABIM's president Yusri Mohamad clarified, "As an Islamic movement which was born and bred in the Malay world, bearing Malay traits based upon *Manhaj Malazi*, the national interest has never been absent from our concerns, even though more people talk nowadays of globalization and the borderless world." See Tuan Hj. Yusri Mohamad, *Jatidiri Gerakan Mendepani Cabaran Zaman: Ucapan Dasar Presiden, Muktamar Sanawi Ke-36 Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) & Seminar Islam dan Cabaran Semasa* (Kuala Lumpur: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 2007), 27. See also the discussion in Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Islamist Realignments and the Rebranding of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia," 228-234.

[433] Cf. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Islamic Resurgence: An Overview of Causal Factors, A Review of 'Ummatic' Linkages," *IKIM Journal* 9, no. 1 (2001): 33-38.

THE NATIONAL BUREAU *of* ASIAN RESEARCH

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Transnational Islam in the Philippines

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Executive Summary

This paper describes significant state and non-state conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines and examines how they have influenced the contemporary conflict dynamics of the country. The paper pays particular attention to the Moro resistance movement in the southern Philippines, observing that the Moros have legitimate grievances as a result of discrimination and the dispossession of their ancestral domains. The paper argues that transnational Islamic propagation activities have heightened the Islamic consciousness of Philippine Muslims, largely encouraging their struggle for self-determination.

MAIN FINDINGS

Though Spain established a dominant Christian community in the major parts of the Philippine archipelago (1565-1898), many Muslim communities in Mindanao remained unconquered. Although political integration programs during U.S. rule of the Philippines (1901-1935) were implemented, including the establishment of a Moro Province, Philippine Muslims were seen as a minority. The long-term result of this minority status among the Moros was a sense of marginality and, ultimately, rejection of the Philippine nation-state. The confluence of transnational Islamic trends following Philippine independence deepened Moro Islamic consciousness while strengthening Moro nationalist sentiment. Transnational Islamic ideas and support inspired Muslim groups in the Philippines to continue their struggle against the Christian-dominated Philippine government. Leaders who resented the oppression of Muslims in the country have established armed resistant groups like the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Other resistant groups and personalities, however, remain unarmed, preferring the path of peaceful change. However, these "peaceful" groups have a complex relationship with the armed groups that confounds the conflict dynamics between Muslims and Christians in the country. Both state-affiliated and non-state transnational Islamic players also complicate the situation by introducing fundamentalist and extremist ideologies that encourage the Moros in their struggle. Among the transnational Islamic groups active in the Philippines, the Tabligh Jamaat has the largest following. The Tabligh Jamaat is often accused of serving as a cover for Muslim extremists to propagate militancy in the country. The Southeast Asian regional terrorist organization, Jemaah Islamiyah, poses the greatest threat to the security of the Philippines.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The Philippine government lacks a coherent and nuanced understanding of transnational Islam, as it tends to simply equate transnational Islam with terrorism.
- Unless the Philippine government can win the hearts and minds of the Moros through effective governance and a nuanced strategy, the conflict in Mindanao will likely continue. This conflict could possibly spillover into Malaysia, while facilitating the movement of transnational militants between these two countries.

This paper examines transnational Islam[434] in the Philippines and its implications for the country's security. Paying particular attention to the ongoing Moro insurgency in the southern Philippines, the paper identifies significant state and non-state conduits of transnational Islam in the country, describing their modes of operation and the impact of their activities and ideologies on the country's conflict dynamics. In light of this discussion, the paper also examines the historical transnational Islamic influences that have fostered the rise of Islam and Islamic sentiment in the Philippines.

The paper argues that transnational Islamic propagation activities have heightened the Islamic consciousness of Philippine Muslims, largely encouraging their continued struggle for self-determination. The paper shows that the Philippine government does not have a coherent and nuanced understanding of transnational Islam, as it tends to simply equate transnational Islam with terrorism. Thus, this paper urges for the government to develop a more effective and nuanced strategy to resolve the ongoing Moro insurgency and Christian-Muslim antagonism that threatens the country's stability.

The paper argues that transnational Islamic propagation activities have heightened the Islamic consciousness of Philippine Muslims, largely encouraging their continued struggle for self-determination.

To address these issues, the paper is divided into three sections. The paper's first section describes the evolution and rise of Islam and Islam's transnational currents in the Philippines. The next section examines some of the key contemporary conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines and assesses their impact on the country's conflict dynamics. Specifically, this section analyzes the role of Malaysia, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran as state conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines, observing how these state players have affected the dynamics of the ongoing Moro rebellion. This section then assesses the Tabligh Jamaat (TJ), the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and significant Islamic non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), the International Relief and Information Center (IRIC), the Islamic Wisdom Worldwide Mission (IWWM), the Markazzo Shabab Al-Islamiyah (MSI), the Fi-Sabilillah Da'wah and Media Foundation (FSDMF), and the Islamic Studies, Call

434 The concept of transnational Islam was first introduced by Gilles Keppel and Olivier Roy to describe a feeling of "growing universalistic Islamic identity" shared by Muslim immigrants and their children who live in non-Muslim countries. See Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); and Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994). Also see Roy's *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). This "growing universalistic Islamic identity" is cemented by the idea of the Islamic *ummah* (community of Muslim believers), which is not only matter of personal faith among Muslims but a shared and socially constructed reality that strongly connotes religious solidarity and social identification beyond ethnic, national and regional boundaries.

Transnational Islam as used in this study refers to Islam's border-crossing activities through state and non-state conduits. The advancement in travels and information communication technology in the era of globalization facilitates the rise of transnational Islam, which is also part of the general rise of transnational religious players in international relations that challenge the Westphalian concept of state sovereignty. See Jeff Haynes, "Transnational Religious Actors and International Politics," *Third World Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2001): 143. Also see Susanne H. Rudolph and James Piscatori (eds.), *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997). Deeply informed by the *ummah*, Muslims everywhere are expected to be concerned with fellow Muslims. The concept of *da'wah* (to invite), which is the cornerstone of Islamic propagation worldwide, reinforces the transnational character of Islam. The Islamic propagation activities across national borders of Muslims inspired by the concept of the ummah and motivated by the principle of da'wah are manifestations of Islam's transnational character.

and Guidance Philippines (ISCAG)—as representatives of key non-state conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines. The paper's third and final section discusses the security challenges posed by transnational Islam in the Philippines and the state's responses to these threats.

Evolution and Rise of Islam in the Philippines

The Philippines has a Muslim population of approximately 5 million, out of the country's total estimated population of 90 million. The vast majority of Muslims are found in the southern Philippines, particularly in the provinces of Sulo, Basilan, Maguindanao and Lanao Del Sur, though small Muslim communities are also established in Luzon and Visayas. The dominant religion in the Philippines is Christianity, which was introduced in the 16th century by Spain. Islam, however, came to the Philippine archipelago two centuries ahead of Spanish colonialism.

The Coming of Islam (and Christianity) to the Philippines

There is a very limited understanding of Islam's historical role in the Philippines due to the lack of reliable archeological information and credible historical accounts from the pre-colonial period.[435] To date, the most authoritative source explaining the spread of Islam in the Philippines is Cesar Majul's book, *Muslims in the Philippines*.[436] In this book, Majul argues that the coming of Islam to the Philippines was a function of the general expansion of Islam in Malaysia.[437] Majul contends that Arab traders and Islamic preachers, who married or converted the area's native inhabitants, became the propagators of Islamic faith in the archipelago.[438]

Islam spread rapidly in Mindanao in the 1470s through the zealous Islamic propagation activities of Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuan who initiated the creation of the Maguindanao Sultanate in the early 16th century.[439] From Mindanao, Islam gained its foothold in Manila, through the leadership of Rajah Solaiman, as well as in Cebu, through the leadership of Rajah Humabon and Rajah Lapu-Lapu. In the mid-16th century, Islam, through the missionary work of Bornean preachers, had effectively gained ground in Batangas, Bonbon, Cagayan, Catanduanes, Laguna, Mindoro, Palawan, Pampanga, and other villages in Luzon and Visayas.[440] With the spread of Islam in the Philippines, the archipelago was said to have become part of the *ummah*, or the worldwide Muslim community.

In 1492, Spain defeated the Moorish kingdom after almost 800 years of Muslim rule. The Spanish victory against the Moors allowed Spaniards to spread the Catholic faith to other parts of the world until it reached the Philippines in 1521 through the leadership of Ferdinand Magellan.

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435 Najeeb Saleeby made a pioneering study of Islam in the Philippines; however, Saleeby's work has been heavily criticized by contemporary scholars for his limited knowledge of Islamic institutions and jurisprudence, and for his failure to take into account the external circumstances that allowed the introduction of Islam into the Philippines. For examples of Saleeby's work, see Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (Manila: The Filipiniana Book Guild, 1905). Also see Najeeb Saleeby, *The Moro Problem: An Academic Discussion of the History and Solution of the Problem of the Government of the Moros of the Philippine Islands* (Manila: E.C. McCullough & Co., 1913).

436 Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, (new ed., Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999).

437 Ibid., 39.

438 With Islam becoming a cherished faith in Malaysia, it expanded to the neighboring Philippines through the island of Sulu where Islam obtained its original foothold. An Arab trader-preacher known as Tuan Mashaika was believed to have founded the first Muslim community in Sulu in the early 14th century by marrying the daughter of a local ruler called Rajah Sipad. But it was only in 1380 that the first mosque was constructed in the Simunol Island of Sulu through the initiative of an Arab trader, Makdum Karim (a.k.a Sharif Awliya), who converted a number of natives to Islam. In 1390, Rajah Baguinda sustained the Islamic propagation of Karim. By the middle of the 15th century, the Sulu Sultanate was established with Syed Abubakar, who originated from Saudi Arabia, as the first crowned Sultan.

439 Ruurddje Laarhoven, *The Maguindanao Sultanate in the 17th Century: Triumph of Moro Diplomacy* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1989).

440 Jubair, *Bangsamoro: A Nation under Endless Tyranny* (Kuala Lumpur: IQ Marin SDN BHD, 1999), 9.

Native Philippine Muslim leaders like Rajah Lapu-Lapu resisted the intrusion of Magellan. In 1565, Spain sent another expedition to the Philippines headed by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi. Through Legaspi, Spain colonized the Philippines, which, at that time, was experiencing a gradual transition from local animist practices to Islamic belief.

Islamic Resistance under Colonial Rule and Foreign Occupation: The "Moro Problem"[441]

When Spain arrived, 98% of the inhabitants in Mindanao were Muslims. Spain observed a "Moorish" practice of the inhabitants and called them Moros. Spanish colonizers attempted to control Mindanao but to no avail. However, Legaspi succeeded in controlling Manila then headed by a Muslim leader, Rajah Solaiman. Muslim leaders in Mindanao continued their resistance against the Spanish conquistadores. The legacy of Spanish Catholicism as defended by the Spanish colonial forces inevitably produced immense hostilities between Muslims and Christians in the Philippines.[442] Spanish colonial rule of the Philippines lasted from 1565 to 1898. Though Spain established a strong and dominant Christian community in the major parts of the archipelago, many Muslim communities in Mindanao remained unconquered.[443] Spain referred to Moro resistance as the "Moro problem,"[444] but the Moros themselves described it as the "Filipino Christian Problem."

During the U.S. colonial rule of the Philippines (1901-1935), the Americans inherited the so-called Moro problem. It was during the American period when the "minoritization" of Muslims in Mindanao occurred.

During the U.S. colonial rule of the Philippines (1901-1935), the Americans inherited the so-called Moro problem.[445] It was during the American period when the "minoritization" of Muslims in Mindanao occurred.[446] Although political integration programs were implemented during the American period with the establishment of a Moro Province, Muslims in the Philippines were seen as a religious and cultural minority, the long-term result of which was a feeling of marginality among Philippine Muslims, dissatisfaction and, ultimately, the Muslims' rejection of the Philippine nation-state.[447]

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441 Some portions of this section are drawn from Rommel Banlaoi, "Radical Muslim Terrorism in the Philippines," in *Handbook on Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Andrew Tan (London: Edward Elgar Publishing, Limited, 2007).

442 See John Pelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959). Also see T. J. S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao: The Rise of Islam in Philippine Politics* (New York, Melbourne, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980).

443 Samuel K. Tan, "History of the Mindanao Problem," in *The Road to Peace and Reconciliation: Muslim Perspective on the Mindanao Conflict*, ed. Amina Rasul (Makati City: Asian Institute of Management, 2003), 5.

444 For the central government in Manila, the Moro problem means that Mindanao does not wish to be incorporated and assimilated into the colonial government or nation-state called the Philippines. Shinzo Hayase, Mindanao *Ethnohistory Beyond Nations: Maguindanao, Sangir, and Bagobo Societies in East Maritime Southeast Asia* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2007), 134.

445 For an excellent account of Muslims in the Philippines during the American colonial rule, see Peter G. Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983).

446 Vic Hurley, *Swish of the Kris: The Story of the Moros* (New York: EP Dutton & Co., 1936).

447 Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 143.

To put an end to resistance, some Muslim leaders laid down their arms and resorted to peaceful means to pursue their cause during the Commonwealth Period (1935-1946). Other Muslim leaders, however, continued their fight against external enemies. Their struggle for independence was reinforced by the establishment in 1928 of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna. The ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood would have profound impacts on Moro leaders advocating for self-determination in the 1930s.

During the Commonwealth Period, some Moro leaders participated in the 1935 National Assembly Election to give the legal process a chance in pursuing their claim for a Moro homeland. But only two Muslim leaders got their seats, prompting other Muslim groups to continue their unrelenting fight for independence. But it was only the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, which resulted in the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, "that more or less blunted the Moro independence movement."[448] During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, the Moros joined anti-Japanese resistance groups.[449] The end of the Second World War led to the total defeat of the Japanese Imperial Army and to the granting of Philippine independence by the United States.

Islamic Resurgence and Resistance in the Post-Independence Period

The granting of Philippine independence after World War II coincided with the resurgence of Islam and the rise of nationalism and fundamentalism in the wider Muslim world.[450] The aftermath of the war saw the worldwide spread of Islamic thought propagated by Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Ayatollah Ruhollah al-Khumayni and Abu al-'Ala al-Mawdudi; these thoughts also influenced the thinking of Muslim leaders in the Philippines clamoring for self-determination. The post-World War II period migration of Muslims to non-Muslim countries facilitated the spread of different interpretations of Islam to other parts of the globe including the Philippines. The assassination of Hasan al-Banna in 1949 was a turning point in the Islamic resurgence as it affected Muslim communities worldwide. By this time, Muslim Brotherhood ideology had spread beyond the Arab world through the media, foreign scholarships and the travels of Muslim activists.

The confluence of all these trends in the post-independence period of the Philippines greatly deepened Moro Islamic consciousness and strengthened Moro nationalist sentiment.[451] It inspired Muslim groups in the Philippines to continue their struggle for self-determination. Encouraged by the struggle of their Muslim brothers abroad, Philippine Muslims led some sporadic uprisings to regain their homeland.[452] In 1951, for example, some Muslims in the Philippines waged the Kamlong uprising, which lasted until 1955. The Kamlong uprising prompted the Philippine government to implement programs that aimed to promote the integration of Muslims into the mainstream Christian-dominated Philippine society.

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448 Samuel K. Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 1995), 28.

449 It has been argued that six months before U.S. forces landed in Leyte to retake the Philippines, "the Muslim territories in Mindanao were already free of the Japanese." See Robert Maulana Alonto, "Four centuries of jihad underpinning the Bangsamoro Muslims' struggle for freedom," at http://www.muslimedia.com/archives/sea99/phil-jihad.htm.

450 Dilip Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1989).

451 Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, 138.

452 For an excellent reader, see Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis (eds), *The Muslim Filipinos: Their History, Society and Contemporary Problems* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974).

Beyond the government-sponsored scholarship programs aimed at integrating the Moros,[453] Muslim governments in the Middle East also offered enticing scholarships to young Moros to help them deepen their Islamic faith (discussed in further detail below). For example, Gamel Abdul Nasser of Egypt implemented his "Pan-Islamic Program" in the 1950s and offered around 200 scholarships to Muslim students in the Philippines. Most of these students studied in Al-Azhar University in Cairo, which is regarded as the main factory for producing Filipino Muslim activists.[454] It was in Cairo where Hashim Salamat, founder of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), formed his radical thoughts.[455] It was also in Cairo where 200 Moro activists received their Islamic education.[456] Other Moro students went to Libya, Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East. This externally funded Islamic education broadened the perspectives of Moro scholars who eventually became leaders of separatist movements in the Philippines.

As a result of these transnational influences and education opportunities abroad, the Moro communities became divided into two major groups: the integrationist or the assimilationist group, and the secessionist or liberationist group.[457] The first group accepts Philippine sovereignty while the second believes that Mindanao should become a separate Islamic state with the inalienable right to independence. Those who continue to defy the authority of the Christian-dominated Philippine government assert their separate identity as Moros and refuse to regard themselves as Filipinos.[458]

In the 1950s to the late 1960s, several Moro societies were organized because of growing Islamic consciousness among Philippine Muslims. Examples of these organizations which served as forerunners of the MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) are the Muslim Association of the Philippines, Ansar el-Islam, the Progressive Youth Movement, the Philippine Muslim Nationalist League, the Green Guards and the Bangsamoro Liberation Organization.[459] These groups were organized with the assistance of Arab governments and Muslim missionaries and Islamic NGOs from Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iran and Egypt.[460]

During this period, the Philippine government also vigorously implemented a land reform program that encouraged Christians from the north to settle in the southern Philippines. By the 1960s, the southern Philippines "had been virtually taken over by a Christian majority except areas like Lanao, Cotabato, Basilan and Sulu."[461] Thus, the Moros "had become a minority in many

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[453] As part of its political integration programs, in 1957 the Philippine government organized the Commission on National Integration (CNI), which provided scholarships in the national capital to young Muslims. The main intention of the program was to encourage the Moros to accept the authority of the centralist government in Manila. The Philippine government envisioned these Moro scholars to become "embryonic Muslim middle class that would energize Muslim participation in the Philippine economy and society and become the next generation of Muslim political leaders." However, some Moros were drawn into opposition politics. See Patricio N. Abinales, *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004), 167.

[454] Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Manila: Anvil Publishing Inc., 1998), 143-144.

[455] Abhoud Syed Mansur Lingga, *The Political Thought of Salamat Hashim*, MA Thesis (University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies, 1995). Also see Franscisco Cruz, Jr., "Moro Jihad and the Islamic Vision of Ustadz Salamat Hashim: Understanding MILF's Politico-Religious Ideology," *Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism Research Paper Series* (August 2008); and Salamat Hashim, *The Bangsamoro Mujahid: His Objectives and Responsibilities* (Mindanao: Bangsamoro Publications, 1985).

[456] Maulawi Calimba, *Muslim Intellectual's contribution to Islamic resurgence in the Philippines: a historical survey*, MA Thesis (University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies, 1990).

[457] For more detailed discussion, see Alunan C. Glang, *Muslim Secession or Integration?* (Quezon City: RP Garcia Publishing Co., 1969).

[458] See Abdurasad Asani, *Moros, Not Filipinos* (Manila: Bangsamoro Research Centre, 1980).

[459] R.J. May, "The Wild West in the South: A Recent Political History of Mindanao," in *Mindanao: Land of Unfulfilled Promise*, eds. Mark Turner, R.J. May and Lulu Respall Turner (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992), 130.

[460] Ibid. Also see Rodolfo B. Mendoza, *Philippine Jihad, Inc.* (Quezon City: Philippine National Police, 2004); and Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 137-174.

[461] Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 29.

parts of their traditional homeland, with many losing their land to the immigrant settlers through dubious legal transactions or outright confiscation."[462] From 76% in the 1900s, the population of Muslims in Mindanao declined to 20% in the 1990s. The massive influx of Christian Filipinos to Mindanao has terribly angered not only the Moros but also their Muslim brothers conducting Islamic propagation missions in the Philippines.

But the real spark that strongly lit the post-independence Muslim armed struggle was the Jabidah Massacre (or Corregidor Massacre) in March 1968.[463] On the Corregidor Island of the Philippines, Moro army recruits were being trained for Operation Merdeka, a codename for the clandestine plan of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to infiltrate Sabah as part of the Philippine government's strategy to strengthen its territorial claim. Allegedly, their trainers summarily executed a number of the Moro recruits.[464] Though it has been argued that the Jabidah Massacre was a myth, the incident prompted Governor Udtog Matalam of Cotabato to form the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) declaring the establishment of an Islamic state in Mindanao.[465] However, Matalam dropped his separatist stand when the Philippine government convinced him to abandon his cause.

However, other Muslim leaders who resented the continuing oppression of Muslims in the Philippines continued their struggle for self-determination leading to the establishment of armed Muslim resistant groups like the MNLF, the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Other resistant groups and personalities remain unarmed, having chosen the path of peaceful change. However, these "peaceful" groups and personalities have a complex relationship with the armed groups, confounding the conflict dynamics between Muslims and Christians in the country. Both state-affiliated and non-state transnational Islamic players also enormously complicate the situation by introducing fundamentalist and extremist ideologies that encourage the Moros in their struggle.

When Muslim resistant groups from the Philippines sent fighters to Afghanistan, these fighters acquired a "new" worldview advocating the purification of Islamic faith.

The Afghan War in the 1980s was a major milestone in the entry of transnational Islam into the post-independence Philippines. When Muslim resistant groups from the Philippines sent fighters to Afghanistan, these fighters acquired a "new" worldview advocating the purification of Islamic faith. The Moro Afghan war veterans delivered an extremist message of Islam upon their return to the Philippines. This ideology affected not only the worldview of the armed Muslim groups but also more mainstream and nonviolent Muslim groups. Foremost among these veterans was

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462 Andrew Tan, "The Indigenous Roots of Conflict in Southeast Asia: The Case of Mindanao," in *After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia*, eds. Ramakrishna, Kumar and Tan See Seng (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing/ Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2003), 99.

463 Samuel K. Tan, *The Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle, 1900-1972* (Manila: Filipinas Foundation, Inc., 1977).

464 See "Jabidah Massacre," at http://www.moroinfo.com/hist8.html. Also see Marites D. Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao* (Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs and Institute for Popular Democracy, 2000), 2-25.

465 Arnold M. Azurin, "The Jabidah Massacre Myth," in his *Beyond the Cult of Dissidence in Southern Philippines and Wartorn Zones in the Global Village* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 1996), 93-103.

Abdurajak Janjalani, the founder of the ASG, who propagated a militant interpretation of jihad in Mindanao.[466] With the global and regional trends in Islamic resurgence in the 1990s, particularly with the end of the cold war, local conflict between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines further acquired an international dimension.[467]

Contemporary Conduits of Transnational Islam in the Philippines: Their Impact on the Current Moro Challenge

As noted above, state-affiliated conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines have heavily influenced the dynamics of the Moro insurgency. Muslim states—particularly Libya, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran—were involved in the Moro problem following the Second World War. These Muslim countries, sanctioned by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), continue to be involved in issues that affect the plight of the Moros by sending peace emissaries to the country. The involvement of Muslim countries in the Philippines has inspired the Moros to pursue their struggle for equality, justice and self-determination. This support has also demonstrated the Moro struggle's transnational linkages throughout the Muslim world.

…state-affiliated conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines have heavily influenced the dynamics of the Moro insurgency.

Non-state players like missionary groups, NGOs and charitable institutions involved in Islamic propagation activities have also affected the conflict dynamics of Christian-Muslim antagonism in the Philippines. Though the non-state players discussed below, with the exception of the Jemaah Islamiyah, are openly registered with the state, some of them have drawn the suspicious ire of the Philippine security establishments for allegedly introducing fundamentalist or extremist interpretations of Islam that endorse political violence.

State Players

As noted previously, Malaysia, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran were among those Muslim states that were involved in the Moro conflicts during the turbulence of the late 1960s when radical Muslim leaders called for jihad against the Philippines government. Their involvement included the provision of financial and logistical support to the Moro rebels, foreign scholarship assistance to Moro activists and even military training to Moro fighters.

W.K. Che Man, a Malaysian scholar, provides an informed analysis of the role of Muslim states in the Moro separatist movement.[468] He states that among the Muslim states, Malaysia played a more prominent role in the armed conflicts by training key Moro leaders after the Jabidah massacre

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466 Abdurajak Janjalani, *Jihad: The Misunderstood Doctrine* (undated recording).

467 Mehol K. Sadain, *Global and Regional Trends in Islamic Resurgence: Their Implications on the Southern Philippines* (Pasay City: Cente for International Relations and Strategic Studies of the Foreign Service Institute, 1994).

468 W.K. Che Man, Muslim Separatism: *The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1990).

of 1968. News reports on the gruesome Jabidah Massacre of 1968 had a galvanizing effect not only on the Moros of the Philippines but also on the Muslim world. Malaysia was one of the Muslim countries that quickly offered assistance to the Moro rebels. In 1969, Malaysia trained 90 Moro fighters in Pulao Pangkor upon the instruction of Tun Datu Mustapha Harun, who at that time was the chief minister of Sabah.[469]

In 2004, Malaysia sent a peacekeeping mission to Mindanao to address the armed conflict of the Philippines government with another Moro resistant group, the MILF. Malaysia led the international monitoring team mandated to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire in Mindanao and other interim agreements related to the peace talks of the Philippine government with the MILF. But Malaysia started pulling its peacekeepers out of Mindanao in April 2008 because of the slow process in the negotiation.

Malaysia's involvement in the MILF peace process was motivated partly by common Islamic identity between Malaysian Muslims and the Moros.[470] However, one strategic consideration is the spillover of the conflict from the southern Philippines to Malaysia, as the ongoing conflict in Mindanao also facilitates the movement of transnational Islamic militants from Malaysia to the Philippines, and vice versa. For example, Zulkipli bin Hir (a.k.a Marwan) fled Malaysia to Mindanao in 2003 to allegedly train JI fighters in the southern Philippines. Being a fellow Muslim, the MILF even gave sanctuary to Zulkipli.

Another state player that has heavily influenced the Moro struggle is Libya.[471] Libya provided the Moro rebels financial assistance during their training in Malaysia. It also gave scholarship programs to some Muslim students in the Philippines. The declaration of martial law in the Philippines in 1972 prompted Libya to further provide funds and weapons to the MNLF. Libya even lobbied the OIC to impose economic sanctions against the Philippine government for its failure to address the Moro problem. Though the OIC did not sanction the Philippine government at that time, it recognized the MNLF as the sole and legitimate representative of the *Bangsamoro* people.

In 2000, Libya was involved again in the southern Philippines when the ASG kidnapped 21 people at a Malaysian resort in Sipadan. Libya mediated for the release of the victims. Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi even offered financial development assistance in areas where the ASG operated in order to alleviate the plight of their Muslim brothers in Mindanao.[472] Libya has also recently initiated a "unity meeting" between the MNLF and the MILF to achieve comprehensive peace in the Philippines.[473]

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469 Tun Datu Mustapha had the reputation of being a devout Muslim in Sabah committed to the cause and propagation of Islam. He firmly believed that his assistance to the Moro rebels was part of his duty to help fellow Muslims suffering oppression from non-believers. These Moro rebels formed the core of the MNLF headed by Nur Misuari. Mustapha's strong sympathy with the cause of the Moros was reinforced by his deep adherence to the concept of *ummah* and his close paternal relations with the Sulu Sultanate. Yet, Mustapha's motivation to assist the Moro rebels was not only based on Malaysia's commitment to religious duty but also as retaliation against the plot of the Philippine military to invade Sabah. See Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, 139.

470 Soliman Santos, Jr., *Dynamics and Directions of the GRP-MILF Peace Negotiations* (Davao City: Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao, Inc., 2005), 91. For an insider's analysis of the peace process, see Salah Jubair, *The Long Road to Peace: Inside the GRP-MILF Peace Process* (Cotabato City: Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, 2007).

471 According to the study made by Che Man, Libya's involvement in the armed conflict in the Philippines was motivated "partly by the dictates of Islamic brotherhood and the Quranic obligation to relieve the persecution of the *Ummah*." See Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, 140.

472 For a detailed account of Libyan involvement in the Sipadan hostage crisis, see Roberto N. Aventajado, *140 Days of Terror: In the Clutches of the Abu Sayyaf* (Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, 2003).

473 See Douglas Bakshian, "Libya Holds Talks With Muslim Rebels in the Philippines," at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2007/12/mil-071214-voa03.htm, accessed on August 5, 2008.

Saudi Arabia not only offered scholarships to Moro students in the 1960s and 1970s, but also provided funds and international sanctuary to members of both the MNLF and the MILF fighters. In 1980, it even suspended its oil supply to the Philippines because of the Moro problem. At that time, Saudi Arabia had just undergone a dramatic Islamic resurgence that had started in the late 1960s making it strongly sensitive to the plight of fellow Muslims worldwide. Through the Muslim World League and Darul Ifta, Saudi Arabia has implemented several projects that aimed to propagate Wahhabi Islam to the Philippines. These projects include the construction of mosques and madaris (religious seminaries) for the Moros.

As noted in the paper's previous section, Egypt enormously influenced the Moro struggle by providing scholarships to Moro rebels. Hashim Salamat's studies at Al-Azhar University "brought him awareness of the colonial oppression his Muslim brothers and sisters were suffering back home, an awareness which gradually transformed him from a scholar to an Islamic revolutionary."[474] It was also in Al-Azhar University where Salamat was exposed to the political and revolutionary philosophy of Syed Qutb, the alleged godfather of revolutionary Islam.[475]

Finally, Iran provided support to the Moro struggle, particularly in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, by providing funds and logistics to the Moro rebels at the request of Nur Misuari when he visited Khomeini in June 1979. Like the other Muslim states mentioned above, Iran also provided scholarships to Moro students who were inspired by the Islamic Revolution. Iran even cut off its oil shipment to the Philippines in the late 1970s to pressure the Philippine government to provide a lasting solution to the Moro problem. Iran's support to the Moro rebels, however, was largely motivated by its desire to export its model of an Islamic state to the Philippines. In fact, current young Moro leaders have considered Iran as a potential template for an independent *Bangsamoro* nation.[476] Even ASG founder, Abdurajak Janjalani, envisioned the creation of an Iranian-Islamist state in the southern Philippines.[477]

Non-State Players

The growth of non-state actors and Islamic NGOs in the Philippines coincided with the proliferation of civil society organizations, private voluntary organizations and social movements in the mid-1980s under the country's newly restored democracy.[478] In Mindanao, several NGOs and social movements were organized to propagate Islam and to alleviate the plight of the Moros. The restoration of Philippine democracy in 1986 provided transnational Islamic preachers a relatively freer political environment to conduct their Islamic propagation activities.[479]

Tabligh Jamaat (TJ) and the Tabligh's Alleged Links to Militant Groups in the Philippines

The most widely known non-state conduit of transnational Islam in the Philippines is the Tabligh Jamaat, locally known as the Tabligh movement or Jamaa Tableegh. Among the transnational

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474 Hashim Salamat at http://belmontclub.blogspot.com/2003/05/siocon-2003-linnet-who-had-lost-her.html, accessed on July 6, 2008.

475 See Lingga, *The Political Thought of Salamat Hashim*.

476 Astrid S. Tuminez, "The Bangsamoro Future: Prospects and Challenges," *Young Moro Leaders Forum*, Special Report (June 11, 2007): 8.

477 See Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., "Bearer of the Sword," *Military Review* (March/ April 2002): 38-47.

478 Aya Fabros, Joel Rocamora and Djorina Velasco (eds), *Social Movements in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Institute for Popular Democracy, 2006); and G. Sidney Silliman and Lela Garner Noble (eds.), *Organizing for Democracy: NGOs, Civil Society and the Philippine State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1998).

479 Michael O. Mastura, "Contemporary Politics in Mindanao," in Mark Turner, et al, *Mindanao*, 147-158.

Islamic groups in the Philippines, the TJ has the largest following, claiming 11,000 to 20,000 members nationwide. The TJ's membership mushroomed in the mid-1980s after the restoration of Philippine democracy. Though the TJ is the most influential transnational religious movement among the Moros, Philippine scholarly literature on the topic is extremely limited.

The TJ was introduced in the Philippines by Pakistani Muslim preachers in the 1980s. Though the TJ is widely appreciated by Muslim communities in the Philippines nationwide, its followers are most prominent in the Basilan province and Lanao del Norte. The movement is currently based in Marawi City, the "Islamic capital" of the Philippines. The known founders of the Tabligh movement in the Philippines were Amilhussion Jumaani of the Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) and Abe Dalogan of the Mindanao State University (MSU). Though these two Moro academics received scholarships from Iran and Libya to specialize in Islamic propagation activities, Pakistani preachers introduced them to the Tabligh.

The Tabligh Jamaat, as understood in the Philippines, is not a homogenous movement. The movement's followers have different stripes and colors, ranging from fundamentalists, traditionalists, modernists and secularists.[480] Despite the diversity of its followers, they all regard the TJ as a movement that aims to bring Muslim faith back to the practices of orthodox Islam.[481] Though the TJ does not take political positions, Moro preachers involved in Tablighi Islamic propagation activities have formed two Muslim political parties, the Ompia Party and the Sabab Party, which have participated in local and regional elections in the southern Philippines.[482]

One of the well-known TJ followers was Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, the founding *amir* of the ASG, an armed Moro fundamentalist group operating in Mindanao.[483] Before founding the ASG, Abdurajak Janjalani became an active follower of the TJ in the early 1980s. The TJ conducted seminars, symposia and small-group discussions to propagate Islam. It was also through this group that Abdurajak delivered some of his Islamic discourses (*khutbas*).[484] Because of the charismatic lectures of Abdurajak, the TJ received popularity not only in Basilan but also in Zamboanga and Jolo.[485] The involvement of some of its followers in anti-government rallies prompted the Philippine military to put the group under surveillance.

Key Tablighi followers formed the nucleus of the ASG, which Abdurajak Janjalani initially called Al-Harakat Al-Islamiyyah (AHAI), or the Islamic Movement.[486] The AHAI was able to draw support from likeminded foreign Muslim organizations like Hezbollah of Iran, the Jamaat-i Islami and Hizbul Mujahideen of Pakistan, the Hizb-i Islami of Afghanistan, the Al-

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480 Interview with Imam Addullah Bedijim, June 16, 2008. For a comparison of these different stripes and interpretations of Islam, see Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Benard, Peter Chalk, C. Christine Fair, Theodore Karasik, Rollie Lal, Ian Lesser and David Thaler, *The Muslim World After 9/11* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2004). Also see, Cheryl Benard, *Civil Democractic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003).

481 Angel M. Rabasa, "Southeast Asia: Moderate Tradition and Radical Challenge," in *The Muslim World After 9/11*, eds. Rabasa, et al, 380.

482 Ibid.

483 For an analysis of the ASG, see Alfredo Filler, "The Abu Sayyaf Group: A Growing Menace to Civil Society," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14, no. 4 (Winter 2002). Also see Larry Niksch, "Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippine-US Anti-Terrorism Cooperation," *CRS Report for Congress* (January 25, 2002); and Mark Turner, "Terrorism and Secession in the Southern Philippines: The Rise of the Abu Sayyaf," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 17, no. 1 (June 1995): 1-19. For a more recent analysis of the ASG, see Rommel C. Banlaoi, "The Abu Sayyaf Group and Terrorism in the Southern Philippines: Threat and Response," in *The US and the War on Terror in the Philippines*, eds. Patricio N. Abinales and Nathan Gilbert Quimpo (Pasig: Anvil Publishing, 2008).

484 Abdurajak Janjalani, "Jihad: The Misunderstood Doctrine" (undated recording).

485 Abu Hamdie, "The Abu Sayyaf Group" (undated and unpublished manuscript).

486 Rommel C. Banlaoi, *Al-Harakatul Al-Islamiyyah: Essays on the Abu Sayyaf Group* (Quezon City: Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, 2008), 12.

Gamaa Al-Islamiya of Egypt, the Islamic Liberation Front of Algeria, and the International Harakat Al-Islamia of Libya.[487]

Because most of the core ASG organizers were Tablighi followers, Philippine intelligence agencies monitored their activities. The Philippine police even suspected TJ activities as covers for some members of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) to penetrate Mindanao. JI leader, Julkipli Salim Y Salamuddin, introduced himself as a TJ member when he entered Mindanao. He is now one of the primary suspects for the bombing of Davao City International Airport and Sasa Wharf in 2003.

But TJ followers deny any formal link with the JI. Though the TJ drew the suspicious ire of Philippine law enforcement agencies, it was widely accepted by Moros for being non-political and non-partisan. Even Catholic churches in Mindanao welcomed the presence of Tablighis for being apolitical and pious. The movement's grassroots orientation also made the Tabligh missionaries closer to the Muslim communities. Tabligh missionaries have immersed themselves in the community to propagate Islam. They are also involved in mosque construction and madrassa education.

In Jolo, TJ Islamic propagation activities were well received by the Muslim communities. The Tabligh and its *da'wah* (proselytizing) activities "led to the adjustment of the daily life of the Tausug towards Islamic ideology."[488] In Zamboanga City, the TJ was also welcomed not only by ordinary Muslims but also by Muslim leaders, professionals and businessmen.[489] The Tabligh has also made "great strides especially in awakening the people's consciousness to Islamic teachings and obligations."[490] However, Catholic priests in Mindanao, particularly in Basilan, began to be alarmed by Tabligh activities when they heard that some of the TJ's adherents were encouraging the population not to believe in the Catholic Church.[491]

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)

Among the transnational Islamic non-state players operating in the Philippines, the terrorist JI network poses the greatest threat to the security of the Philippines and the larger Southeast Asian region. Founded in Indonesia, the Jemaah Islamiyah has established complex transnational networks in Malaysia, Singapore, the southern Philippines, southern Thailand and even Australia.[492] The JI has networks in South Asia, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan where its

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487 Department of National Defense, "Talking Points on the Abu Sayyaf Group" (unpublished manuscript, November 17, 2003).

488 Hadja Eleonor S.A. Esmula, "The Impact of Tabligh and Da'wah in the Socio-Religio Transformation in Jolo," MA Thesis (University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies, 1994).

489 Basher Balla Bandahala, "*The Tabligh* in a Muslim Community: A Case Study of Tabligh in Campo Islam, Zamboanga City," MA Thesis (University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies, 1994).

490 Ibid.

491 Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 210.

492 International Crisis Group, *Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates* (Jakarta: International Crisis Group, 2002).

core Islamist fighters received military trainings.[493] The JI is also part of al Qaeda's global network of mujahideen.[494]

Compared with the TJ, which is pious and non-political, the JI is extremist as it endorses political violence and has masterminded several bombings in Southeast Asia.[495] The JI established its presence in the Philippines in 1994 by building ties initially with the MILF and eventually with the ASG.[496] These ties originated in the late 1980s in Afghanistan where Moro and Indonesian Muslim fighters received joint training in a camp commanded by Ustadz Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. Around 600 Moro mujahideen were sent to Afghanistan by pretending to be either pilgrims on the way to Mecca, or in search of employment in Pakistan.[497]

The JI's transnational Islamic operations in the Philippines were revealed by the arrest of Fathur Rahman Al-Ghozi in 2002. Al-Ghozi was suspected to be the mastermind of the "Rizal Day" bombing in 2000. The JI's presence in the Philippines to propagate Islamic extremism was further confirmed by Mohammed Nasir bin Abbas who confessed to have led the JI's *mantiqi* three based in Camp Hodeiba in the southern Philippines. Based on the AFP's 2008 Second Quarter Threat Assessment, it is believed that there are around 30 JI members now operating in the country, including Dulmatin and Omar Patek who are wanted for the 2002 Bali bombing.

International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO)

The Islamic charitable organization IIRO was originally established in 1978 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The IIRO has established a transnational network with branches in more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.[498] The IIRO's branch in the Philippines was established in Marawi City in 1988 under the umbrella organization of the Muslim World League, and is a major conduit of transnational Islam. In 1993, the IIRO acquired was recognized in the Philippines when the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) approved its incorporation to provide philanthropic services, medical assistance, and humanitarian relief not only to poor

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493 Reyko Huang, "In the Spotlight: Jemaah Islamia," CDI Terrorism Project (Washington D.C.: Center for Defense Information, 2002).

494 Richard Paddock, "Southeast Asian Terror Exhibits Al Qaeda Traits," *Los Angeles Times,* March 3, 2002. Also see, Rohan Gunaratna, "Understanding Al-Qaeda and its Network in Southeast Asia," in *Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational Challenges to States and Regional Stability*, ed. Paul Smith (New York: ME Sharp, 2004), 62-78.

With its vision to establish a pan-Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia, the Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs discovered that the JI originally organized itself into four major territorial groups called mantiqis, namely:

- *mantiqi* one covering Malaysia, Singapore and southern Thailand;
- *mantiqi* two covering the whole of Indonesia (except Sulawesi and Kalimantan), particularly Solo and Central Java;
- *mantiqi* three covering the southern Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia (Sulawesi and Kalimantan) and Malaysia (Borneo and Sabah); and
- *mantiqi* four covering Irian Jaya and Australia.

See Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs, *Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism* (Singapore, 2003).

495 See Greg Barton, J*emaah Islamiyah: Radical Islamism in Indonesia* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005); Kumar Ramakrishna, *Constructing the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist: A Preliminary Inquiry* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2004); and John T. Sidel, *The Islamist Threat in Southeast Asia: A Reassessment* (Washington D.C.: East-West Center, 2007).

496 Rommel C. Banlaoi, *War on Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Quezon City: Rex Book Store International, 2004), 17-40.

497 Interestingly, 200 Moro mujahideen who went to Afghanistan were Muslim converts. Most of these converts worked in the Middle East. But out of 600 volunteers, only 360 actually reached Afghanistan and only 180 joined the fight against the Soviets. See Maria Ressa, *Seeds of Terror: An Eyewitness Account of Al-Qaeda's Newest Center of Operations in Southeast Asia* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 127. After three months of intensive fighting, only 70 Moros survived and returned to the Philippines to spread Islamic extremism. See Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rinner Publishers, Inc., 2003), 89-120.

498 "International Islamic Relief Organization," at http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/groupProfile.asp?grpid=6312, accessed on August 25, 2008.

Muslim communities in Mindanao but also to Christian communities who were victims of natural disasters in Luzon and the Visayas.[499]

The IIRO spearheaded the "Balik-Islam," or "return to Islam" program, which encouraged non-Muslim Filipinos to accept the Islamic faith.[500] The IIRO even financed the candidacy of a Muslim politician running for governor during the 1998 election. Muhammad Jamal Khalifa, the brother-in-law of Osama bin Laden, was later incorporated as chairman of the IIRO in the Philippines.

While conducting charitable work and Islamic propagation activities, the IIRO financed the establishment in 1991 of Dar'ul Imam Shafee, an Islamic center in Marawi City, suspected by Philippine law enforcement agencies to be propagating extremist interpretations of Islam and producing graduates associated with the ASG and the MILF. One of the graduates of this Islamic center was Yasser Igasan, the ASG's current *amir*. Philippine intelligence agencies said that the IIRO also financed the ASG in procuring weapons. The IIRO also allegedly financed the activities of other Islamic organizations and groups in Mindanao like the Voice of the United Muslim Modulators Association in Zamboanga City; the Islamic Foundation and Guidance Center in Iligan City; and the Organization of Islamic Efforts based in Marawi City. Even MILF leaders admitted that the IIRO provided aid to Moro organizations to build mosques, orphanages, and other infrastructure needed by the impoverished Muslim communities in Mindanao.[501]

In 2006, the Philippine government froze IIRO bank accounts, because the organization was charged with financing the terrorist activities of the ASG.[502] The Philippine government's Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) sought to freeze IIRO's Philippine bank account after the U.S. Department of Treasury revealed the involvement of IIRO's Philippine and Indonesian branches in fundraising activities for al Qaida and its affiliate Islamic organizations. The U.S. Treasury also revealed that the IIRO's branch in the Philippines served as a liaison for the ASG with other Islamic extremist groups. IIRO was also accused of having ties with JI leaders like Hambali and Abdula Sungkar.[503]

International Relief and Information Center (IRIC)

Muhammad Jamal Khalifa founded the IRIC in the Philippines as a non-profit organization in June 1994. The IRIC was originally registered as the International Relations and Information Association (IRIA) in May 1990; thus it is often called by this name, and is currently led by Abu Omar. But the known chairman of the IRIC has been Abdul Salam Zubair, an Iraqi citizen believed to be working closely with Khalifa. The IRIC's primary purpose was to propagate the true essence of Islam in the Philippines through seminars, symposiums, and pamphlets using Muslim missionaries from the Middle East. The IRIC became the hub of Islamic propagation and Islamic

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499 Abdulhadi Bin A.T. Daguit, "The Role of Rabitatul Alam Al-Islamic (World Muslim League) International Islamic Relief Organization of Saudi Arabia in the Philippines: 1985-2001," MA Thesis (University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies, 2002). Mike Abrera of Billah Islam, a foundation of converts based in Antipolo City in the province of Rizal, claims that Balik-Islam members have reached around two million to date (telephone interview conducted in January 2007). Because of the phenomenon of Balik-Islam, it is argued that Islam is becoming the fastest growing religion in the Philippines. The Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) claimed that around 110,000 Filipinos have been reverted back to Islam since 2001. The Islamic Information Center (IIC) says that it is reverting three to five Filipinos everyday.

500 International Crisis Group, *Philippine Terrorism: The Role of Militant Islamic Convert* (Jakarta: International Crisis Group, 2005).

501 Jubair, *The Long Road to Peace*, 59.

502 Rey E. Requejo, "Abu-linked group's bank account frozen," Manila Standard (December 12, 2006).

503 For a more detailed analysis, see Zachary Abuza, "Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: Exploring the Linkages," at www.pvtr.org/pdf/RegionalAnalysis/SouthEastAsia/Al%20Qaeda%20in%20SEA.pdf, accessed on August 4, 2008.

conversion activities in the Philippines complimenting the work of the IIRO.[504] Though the IRIC's main activities were philanthropic, Philippine police investigation discovered that it served as the main financial conduit to Ramzi Yousef's al Qaeda cell in the Philippines.[505]

Islamic Wisdom Worldwide Mission (IWWM)

The IWWM was registered in the Philippines in March 1994 by a group of Arabians, Jordanians and Filipinos. But Jamal Khalifa was suspected of actually managing the IWWM. The IWWM was also involved in Islamic propagation activities in cooperation with the IIRO and the IRIC. The IWWM reportedly propagated Islamic fundamentalism through distributing Islamic literature, radio broadcasts and through the construction of mosques and Islamic centers.[506] The IWWM was accused of funneling funds to Moro militants in the Philippines.[507]

Markazzo Shabab Al-Islamiyah (MSI)

The Markazzo Shabab Al-Islamiyah is also known as the Bangsamoro Youth League, which reportedly aims to propagate Islamic brotherhood and revivalism in the Philippines and abroad based on the ideas and principles of the Muslim Brotherhood. The MSI is one of the conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines because it calls for the establishment not only of an independent Islamic state in Mindanao but also for the establishment of a worldwide Islamic society. Police investigation revealed that the MSI established links with the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) based in Saudi Arabia and reportedly received funding from the IIRO.[508]

Fi-Sabilillah Da'wah and Media Foundation (FSDMF)

The FSDMF is an organization of Muslim converts in the Philippines. Founded by Ahmad Santos, a Filipino working in Saudi Arabia, it has the main goal of propagating "the true essence of Islam in order to correct the misconceptions about Islam and Muslims."[509] Philippine police and military intelligence units argued that Santos formed the FSDMF in 1995 as the legal cover for the Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement (RSIM) to promote Wahhabism in Luzon. The RSIM has been declared by the United States as one of the foreign terrorist organizations in the Philippines.[510] But Santos denies any involvement of the FSDMF with terrorist activities.

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504 The IRIC was able to establish strong organizational networks with the following likeminded Muslim organizations: Islamic Presentation Committee (IPC); Islamic World Committee (IWC); Islamic Wisdom Worldwide Mission (IWWM); Islamic Studies, Call and Guidance of the Philippines (ISCAG); Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines (IDCP); Islamic Da'wah and Guidance International (IDGI); International Islamic Efforts Foundation (IIEF); and Darul Ehsan Orphanage and Hifsul Quran Center.

505 Ibid.

506 The IWWM published the *Wisdom Journal* and sponsored a radio program aired every day, from 9:30 to 10:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday, on AM radio station DZME.

507 Mendoza, *Philippine Jihad, Inc.*, 48.

508 Based on the records of Philippine law enforcement agencies, the MSI has established networks with the following Muslim organizations and associations in Mindanao: the Union of Arabic and Islamic Scholars, chaired by Aleem Muconif Mangangcong; the Shakba Al-Islamic Movement, led by Ustadz Baransing Pangcoga with an estimated 200 members; the Iranun Islamic Society, headed by Aleem Talisan Birua; Al'hul Bait Islamic Movement, chaired by Aleem Alomodin Garib with an estimated 400 members; the Islamic Movement for Electoral Reforms and Good Government, led by Lacsamana Abdullah Dalidig; the Islamic Research and Development Incorporated (IRDI), headed by Ustadz Ismael Yusoph Linangan; the Federation of Ranao Islamic Association (FRIA), chaired by Lacsamana Abdullah Dalidig; the Muslim Welfare and Rehabilitation Federation, led by Ustadz Ampaso Mambuay with 200 members; the Al-Amin Radio Forum; the Pilandok Radio Forum; the Philippine Association of Islamic Ulamis; Khadidia, a Muslim women organization; Mudjadilah Islamiyah; and the Muslim Student and Youth League. See Mendoza, *Philippine Jihad, Inc.*, 48.

509 A conversation with Ahmad Santos at the Bicutan Jail on August 5, 2008.

510 Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Terrorist Group Behavior in the Philippines: The Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement" (paper presented at the the international conference of the Council of Asian Terrorism Research, Philippine Plaza Hotel, Manila, March 27-29, 2007).

With the FSDMF, Santos started preaching for the purification of Islam with the support of fellow Muslims in Saudi Arabia. Santos even had radio programs to propagate his views. With the support of Arab missionaries, Santos delivered lectures emphasizing the need to Islamize Luzon, initially, and eventually the entire Philippines, arguing that a true Muslim has the great mission to spread Islam. He even agitated his audience with film clips of Muslims being oppressed, massacred and butchered in different parts of the world.[511] In October 2005, Santos was imprisoned for his alleged involvement in the Sipadan hostage incident. At the time of his arrest, he was accused of being the ASG's media bureau chief. But Santos denies his involvement with the ASG and the Sipadan case.

Followers of the FSMDF argue that as a result of their Islamic propagation activities, they have been converting two to three persons daily excluding "the number of reverts from Islamic centers and schools scattered throughout the country and in the areas where Muslim organizations hold symposiums, forums and lectures."[512]

Islamic Studies, Call and Guidance (ISCAG)

Founded by Bienvenido "Khalid" Evaristo**,** a former overseas worker in Saudi Arabia, ISCAG has a declared objective "to bring the true message of Islam to the Filipino people towards the understanding, prosperity and peace of the country."[513] In January 1992, ISCAG was registered with the SEC, and opened its first office in Manila. In 1995, ISCAG acquired a property in Damarinas Cavite of southern Luzon where its present center is located. ISCAG has strong links with mainstream Islamic charities in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Libya. Officially accredited by the OMA, ISCAG is actively involved in Islamic propagation activities and charitable missions. ISCAG also grants scholarships to Muslims in various professional fields. More importantly, it regularly conducts forums, seminars and conferences to propagate Islam in the Philippines. Because of its link with other transnational Islamic groups in the Philippines, ISCAG's Islamic propagation activities have helped to make Islam the fastest growing religion in the Philippines.

However, ISCAG was placed under surveillance because some of its members are accused of spreading militant Islam. But ISCAG officials assert that they defy any militant activities and they are only involved in pure Islamic propagation missions. The OMA's chief, Zamzamin Ampatuan, explains that ISCAG missionaries are suspected of spreading militant Islam because Muslim converts are "more fiery" about their Islamic faith.[514] "Those born into Islam are more sober toward the faith because we've had more time [to digest its teachings]," he said.[515]

Other Non-State Conduits of Transnational Islam in the Philippines

Aside from the Tabligh, IIRO, IRIC, IWWM, the MSI, FSDMF and ISCAG, there are other local and foreign NGOs that have become conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines. These Islamic NGOs include, among others, the Mercy Foundation, the Muslim World League, the Benevolence International Corporation, the Darul Hijra Foundations, the Islamic World

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511 Based on revelations from a member of the FSDMFI, interviewed in July 2005.

512 Based on the confidential testimony of a Balik-Islam personality.

513 For more information about ISCAG, visit its website at http://www.iscag.com.

514 Johnna Villaviray, "Islam Attracts the Disillusioned," *Manila Times*, November 18, 2003.

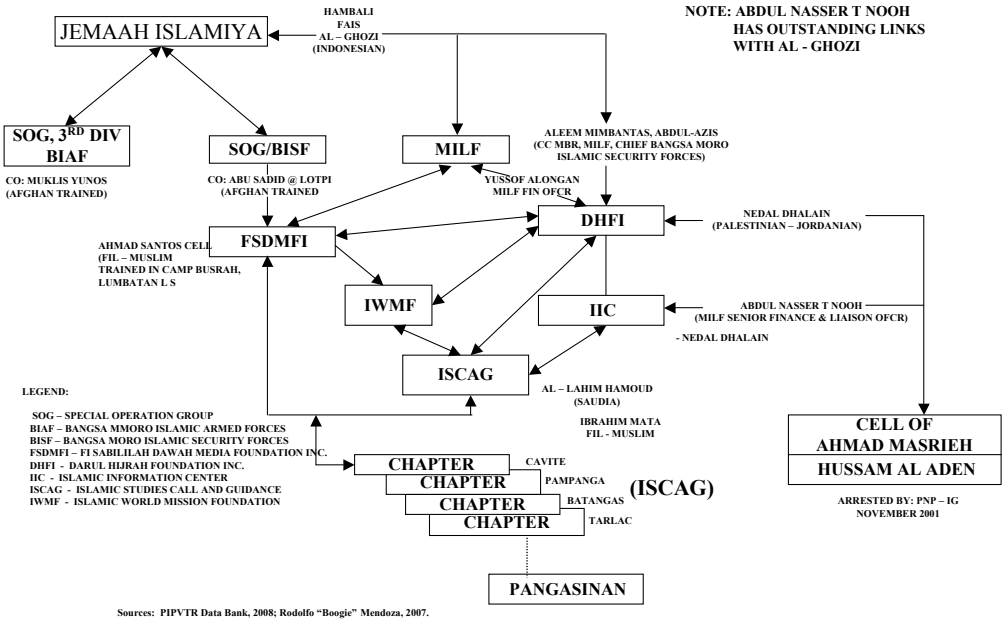
515 Ibid.

Committee Foundation (IWCF) and the Islamic Students Association of the Philippines (ISAP). The activities of these NGOs were discovered in 1994 and suspected of having established relations with al Qaeda and the JI.[516]

Then Colonel Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza submitted a 175-page report to the Philippine National Police in 1994 describing the subtle infiltration of local Muslim groups by transnational Islamic groups believed to be linked with international terrorist group now called al Qaeda.[517] These transnational Islamic groups legally operated in the Philippines in the 1990s amidst the global Islamic resurgence (for a detailed diagram of the transnational Islamic NGOs with alleged links to al Qaeda during this period, see Appendix I). However, because of the global campaign against terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the transnational networks of these Islamic NGOs have been disrupted. The death of Khalifa in January 2007 and the freezing of the IIRO's bank account in the Philippines in December 2006, also led to the disruption of these transnational Islamic NGO networks in the Philippines.

The media, scholarly networks, transnational Islamic social movements and NGOs also became the primary conduits of transnational Islam in the Philippines (see Figure 1). Non-governmental Islamic groups and organizations funded by transnational Islamic charities, for example, sponsored a radio program, "Islam is the Answer." This radio program discussed topics aimed to promote "harmony and unity" of Muslims and non-Muslim citizens of the Philippines. More importantly, this radio program emphasized the value of the Islamic heritage of the Philippines. These Islamic groups and organizations also distributed well known radical literature on Islamic propagation like "The Process of Islamic Revolution" by Sayyid Abul A'la Maridude.[518] They also distributed pamphlets with excerpts of the writings and ideas of Hasan Al-Bana and Sayyid Qutb.

FIGURE 1 NETWORK OF TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM IN THE PHILIPPINES


JEMAAH ISLAMIYA
HAMBALI
FAIS
AL – GHOZI
(INDONESIAN)
NOTE: ABDUL NASSER T NOOH HAS OUTSTANDING LINKS WITH AL - GHOZI
SOG, 3RD DIV BIAF
CO: MUKLIS YUNOS (AFGHAN TRAINED)
SOG/BISF
CO: ABU SADID @ LOTPI (AFGHAN TRAINED
MILF
YUSSOF ALONGAN MILF FIN OFCR
ALEEM MIMBANTAS, ABDUL-AZIS (CC MBR, MILF, CHIEF BANGSA MORO ISLAMIC SECURITY FORCES)
DHFI
NEDAL DHALAIN (PALESTINIAN – JORDANIAN)
FSDMFI
AHMAD SANTOS CELL (FIL – MUSLIM TRAINED IN CAMP BUSRAH, LUMBATAN L S
IWMF
IIC
ABDUL NASSER T NOOH (MILF SENIOR FINANCE & LIAISON OFCR)
- NEDAL DHALAIN
ISCAG
AL – LAHIM HAMOUD (SAUDIA)
IBRAHIM MATA FIL - MUSLIM
LEGEND:
SOG – SPECIAL OPERATION GROUP
BIAF – BANGSA MMORO ISLAMIC ARMED FORCES
BISF – BANGSA MORO ISLAMIC SECURITY FORCES
FSDMFI – FI SABILILAH DAWAH MEDIA FOUNDATION INC.
DHFI - DARUL HIJRAH FOUNDATION INC.
IIC - ISLAMIC INFORMATION CENTER
ISCAG - ISLAMIC STUDIES CALL AND GUIDANCE
IWMF - ISLAMIC WORLD MISSION FOUNDATION
CHAPTER
CAVITE
CHAPTER
PAMPANGA
CHAPTER
BATANGAS
CHAPTER
TARLAC
(ISCAG)
PANGASINAN
CELL OF AHMAD MASRIEH
HUSSAM AL ADEN
ARRESTED BY: PNP – IG NOVEMBER 2001
Sources: PIPVTR Data Bank, 2008; Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza, 2007.

[516] Mendoza, *Philippine Jihad, Inc.* Also see Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Zachary Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror: Al-Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24, no. 3 (December 2002): 427-465.

[517] Intelligence Command of the Philippine National Police, *The Islamic Fundamentalist/Extremist Movements in the Philippines and their Links with International Terrorist Organizations* (Quezon City, 1994), 39.

[518] Sayyid Abul A'la Maridude, *The Process of Islamic Revolution*, at http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/M_PIR/Default.htm.

This literature greatly influenced the radical thought of key Moro leaders like the MILF's Hashim Salamat and the MNLF's Habir Malik. Even Ahmad Santos of the RSIM admitted to have been influenced by the works of Al-Bana and Qutb.[519] These non-state Islamic actors also sponsored free film showings of famous battles taking place throughout the Muslim world in, for example, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan, which agitated the feelings of their members.

Security Challenges and the State's Response

As a matter of state policy, the Philippine government allows transnational Islamic organizations to operate in the Philippines if they are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Because of their alleged links with extremist Islamic groups, however, as noted above, the propagation and conversion activities of some transnational Islamic groups in the country have caught the attention of law enforcement agencies. Since most of the NGOs mentioned in this study were funded by Muhammad Jamal Khalifa, they became targets of the Philippine government's scrutiny. The security threat posed by transnational Islamic NGO's with links to bin Laden went beyond the Philippines, extending to the United States. The Bojinka Plot, which aimed to bomb eleven airliners flying from Asia to the U.S., was one such example.

While it is legal to participate in the Tabligh Jamaat's activities in the Philippines, the movement is accused as serving as a cover for some Muslim extremists to propagate militant Islam in the country. The TJ was even suspected by the military for serving as a conduit of Saudi money to radical Muslim terrorist groups in the Philippines. Philippine intelligence also accused the TJ of being a cover for Pakistani jihad volunteers to the Philippines. When Janjalani formed the organizational structure of the ASG, he created a special committee called the Jamiatul Al-Islmia Revolutionary Tabligh Group, thus making the military suspicious of the TJ.[520] But a study on the Moro rebellion in Mindanao argues that "to say that Janjalani drew his ideological and spiritual bent only from the Tabligh would be unfair."[521] Janjlani was naturally drawn to the Tabligh, being a preacher and having established good relations with the *ulama*.[522] There is no doubt, however, that some TJ members in Basilan were accused of being members of ASG.[523] This poses a huge dilemma for law enforcers as legal movements like the TJ can be used as covers for illicit activities of suspected Muslim extremists endorsing violence.

Other transnational Islamic groups engaged in *da'wah* and Islamic propagation activities have also come under the scrutiny of the state because of their alleged involvement in the spread of Islamic extremism. The Philippine police, for example, regard the International Information Center (IIC), a Muslim center based in Quiapo, Manila, as a front for the RSIM. The Philippine Association of Muslimah Darul Eeman, Inc. (PAMDAE) is also accused by the Philippine police as being a front of the ASG to recruit Metro Manila-based Islam converts in its fold.[524] The following Muslim convert groups have also aroused official curiosity because of their alleged links with

519 Conversation with Ahmad Santos at Bicutan Jail, August 11, 2008.

520 Office of the Assistant to the Chief of Staff for Intelligence, *Field Handout: Doctrinal Extract for the Abu Sayyaf Group* (Headquarters of the Philippine Marine Corps, January 21, 2002).

521 Vitug and Glenda, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 209.

522 Ibid.

523 Interview with Ahiri Tadjah at the Bicutan Jail on August 13, 2008. Ahiri Tadjah admitted to having been an active follower of the TJ. He is accused of being a member of the ASG. Tadjah, however, denies being an ASG member.

524 A paper obtained from the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, March 1, 2005.

charitable institutions funded by al Qaeda: Al Maarif Education Center (Baguio City), Da'rul Hijra Foundation, Inc. (Makati City), Islamic Learning Center (Pangasinan), and Al Farouk Islamic Institute (Palawan). Dealing with these groups is a great challenge for the Philippine police and the military because of strong Muslim sensitivities to any state actions against Muslim organizations and institutions.

The Philippine government lacks a coherent and nuanced understanding of transnational Islam. It tends to equate transnational Islam with transnational terrorism.[525] Though the Philippine government adopted the Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA) as a grand strategy to overcome insurgency-related problems posed by Islamic extremism in the country, it encountered problems in implementing SHA because operating units on the ground did not fully understanding the strategy. The SHA consists of four major components: 1) political/legal/diplomatic; 2) socio-economic/psycho-social; 3) security; and 4) information.[526] The SHA is the government's over-all strategy to implement the country's National Internal Security Plan (NISP).

The Philippine government lacks a coherent and nuanced understanding of transnational Islam. It tends to equate transnational Islam with transnational terrorism.

In 2006, the Philippine government replaced the SHA with the "whole of government" (WOG) strategy as part of its enhanced NISP. Like the SHA, the WOG aims to address the root causes of security challenges facing the Philippine state. Though the WOG claims to have paid greater attention to non-military means to defeat terrorism (which include job creation in the rural areas, provisions of social services and infrastructure to communities, strengthening good governance at the national and local levels and the establishment of an effective local judiciary system), this strategy also encountered the same fate as the SHA.[527] Government analysts regard the WOG as an effective approach to counter Islamic extremism and transnational terrorism in the country.[528]

Despite the implementation of the WOG, the Philippine government, in fact, failed to deter violence in Mindanao, though pursuing peace talks with the Moro rebels is one of the government's major goals. The failure of the Philippine government to prevent violence in Basilan, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato, and Shariff Kabungsuan in August 2008 resulted from a severe misunderstanding of the controversial Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain between the Philippine government and the MILF, and has put the current peace process in doubt.[529] This confrontation between the Philippine military and the combined ASG-MILF forces resulted in

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525 This is evident in the following documents, *The Philippine Campaign Against Terrorism* (Quezon City: Department of National Defense, 2002); and *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in the Philippines: A Philippine Perspective* (Quezon City: Philippine Center on Transnational Crime, 2004).

526 Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security, *National Internal Security Plan* (NISP), version 3. Quotations in this particular section come from this document, unless otherwise stated.

527 Department of National Defense, *Defense Planning Guidance*, 2008-2013 (Quezon City: Department of National Defense, November 2006), 1.

528 Ibid.

529 For a good background on the ongoing peace process and its challenges, see Salah Jubair, "MILF Peace Talks with the Philippine Government," in *Voice From Moroland: Perspectives from Stakeholders and Observers on the Conflict in the Southern Philippines*, eds. Peter Kreuzer and Rainer Werning (Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia: Strategic Information and Research Development Center, 2007), 59-98.

the displacement of around 260,000 residents, and demonstrates the limitation of implementing the WOG.

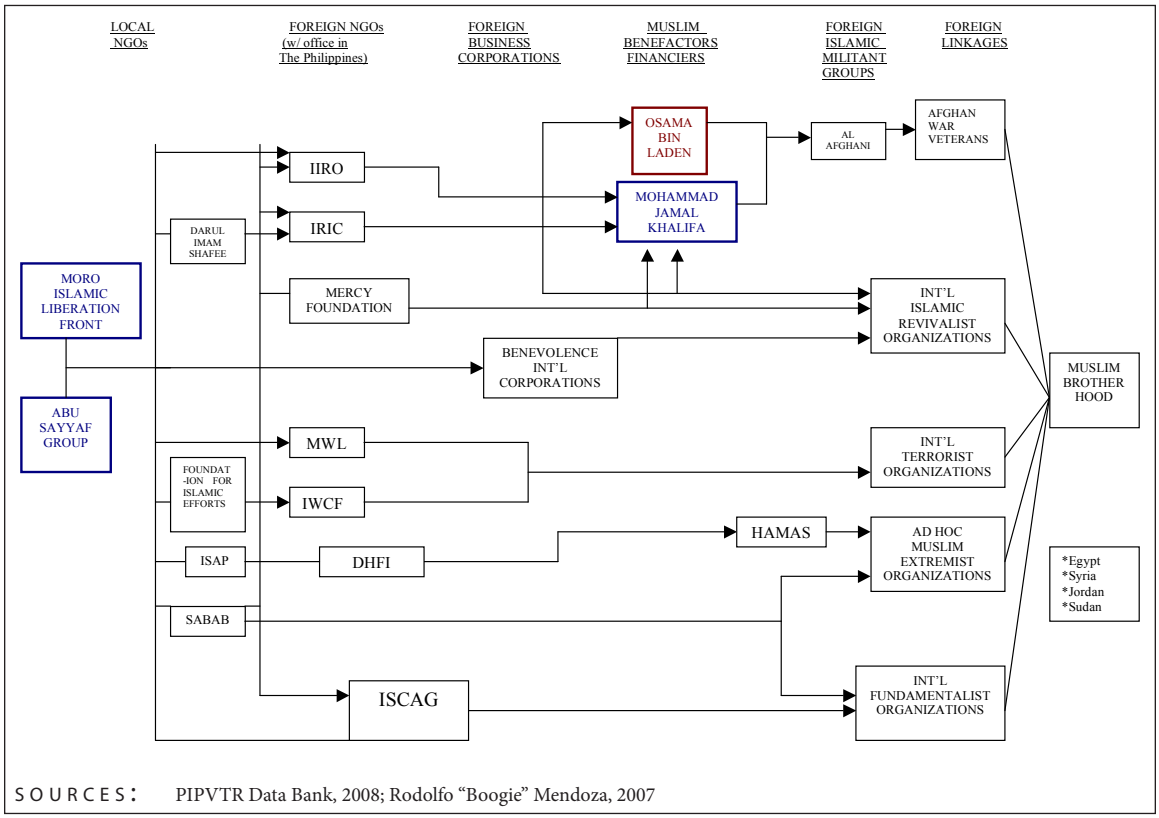
Interfaith dialogue is one of the Philippine government's innovative responses to the challenges posed by transnational Islam in the country. The Philippine government introduced this project in 2004 before members of the United Nations. The initiative primarily aims to restore peace in the conflict-stricken island of Mindanao. An important mechanism of the interfaith dialogue is the Bishop-Ulama Conference, which aims to promote mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians in the Philippines.

Conclusion

Muslims in the Philippines have argued that the country would have been an Islamic state were it not for Spanish colonialism, which established Christianity as the country's official religion. At present, Islam has become the religion of the minorities in the country. Yet, Islam is becoming the fastest growing religion in the Philippines because of the vigorous Islamic propagation activities of transnational Islamic groups linked with local Muslims in the Philippines. With the ongoing conflict in the southern Philippines, the propagation activities of transnational Islamic groups are being suspected as serving as conduits of Islamic extremism while inciting the Moros who are struggling for their right to self-determination.

The Islamic challenges in the southern Philippines have deep underlying causes. The Moros have legitimate grievances as a result of discrimination and the feeling of dispossession resulting from the taking away of their ancestral domains. Propagation activities of transnational Islamic groups have heightened the Islamic consciousness of Muslims in the Philippines in their struggle for self-determination. Unless the Philippine government wins the heart and minds of the Moros through effective governance, the conflict in Mindanao will likely continue to be one of the longest running armed conflicts in the world.

APPENDIX I Transnational Islamic NGOs Associated with Al Qaeda, 1994-1995



SOURCES: PIPVTR Data Bank, 2008; Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza, 2007

THE NATIONAL BUREAU *of* ASIAN RESEARCH

NBR PROJECT REPORT | APRIL 2009

Local Networks and Transnational Islam in Thailand (with emphasis on the southernmost provinces)

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Executive Summary

This paper assesses the impact of transnational Muslim networks on the social, political, and conflict dynamics of Thailand. By observing three key transnational Islamic networks—the Muslim Brotherhood-influenced Young Muslim Association of Thailand (YMAT), the Jemaat Tabligh, and the Salafi-Reformist network—this paper finds a tremendously fluid and dynamic Muslim terrain in southern Thailand, where representations of Islamic creed, legitimacy, and authority are increasingly contested. The paper also provides an in-depth look into the transnational dimensions of the contemporary Muslim-based resistance in the southern provinces. Here, the paper argues that there is little substantive evidence of any sustained penetration of the southern Thailand conflict by transnational militant groups.

MAIN FINDINGS

The past two decades have witnessed a proliferation of new sources of religious authority and norms in Muslim Thailand, particularly in the southern Muslim-majority provinces. These new Islamic groupings and alignments not only serve religious functions, but are also transforming social and cultural institutions as well. The authority of the traditional religious establishment in southern Thailand is gradually eroding as the terrain of Islam in the country is increasingly shaped by a proliferation of modern and transnational forces. These transnational groups and networks are not only engaging with traditional local forces but also among themselves, thereby enlarging the kaleidoscope of Muslim networks and influences in the country. Notwithstanding the weakening of traditional religious monopolies and the pluralization of ideas, imported ideological influences have hardly been adopted wholesale. Instead, one witnesses constant processes of negotiation as these ideas and practices are localized, thereby adding to the dynamism of the socio-religious terrain. By and large, the Thai state has sought to accommodate Muslim networks as they are not seen as a threat to its political legitimacy. As a matter of fact, many of the key Islamic groups active in Thailand, such as the YMAT or the Jemaat Tabligh, are quietist in political orientation. Other Islamic groups, such as the Salafi-Reformists, are lending support to the state and bolstering its credibility in Muslim eyes. As of yet, there is no evidence that these groups or any other major transnational Muslim networks are involved in the current violence and militancy in the southern provinces.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Because of the weakening of traditional religious monopolies and the diffusion of religious authority, any attempt to engage Muslim leaders, groups, and movements in southern Thailand will have to tread carefully so as not to marginalize or alienate pivotal players.
- Given the continued importance of traditional Islam to matters of culture and identity in southern Thailand, the inevitable repercussions from the erosion of authority, precipitated by the "new" forms of belief and practice, have to be managed carefully.
- Considering the very complex dynamics that define transnational-local networks in Thailand, any attempt at neat categorization will, at best, be arbitrary. Policymakers would benefit by dealing with issue-specific cases rather than generalized categories of groups and movements.

The global religious space that Muslims in Thailand inhabit—not just through the abstract notion of the *ummah* but, more importantly, through the movement and networks of Muslims over many centuries—has always played a critical role in shaping Islamic thought and practice in the country. In many ways, Thailand stands at the interstices of Islam's encounters with the Far East. Though the advent of Islam in Thailand can be traced back as early as the eighth century, it was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the religion flourished as Persian traders brought Shi'a Islam to Bangkok and the plains.[530] In the mid-nineteenth century, ethnic Yunnanese (Haw) Chinese Muslims, fleeing persecution by the Qing Dynasty, settled in northern Thailand's Chiang Mai region via the mountains of the Golden Triangle and added to the kaleidoscope of Islam in the country.

In Thailand's southern border provinces, Islam began commanding strong adherence as the southern kingdom of Patani gravitated into the orbit of the Malay World (*Dunia Melayu*) and underwent an Islamization process together with the Malay sultanates of Kedah, Kelantan, and Terengganu. Owing to these distinct geographical roots of penetration, it is not surprising to find that, notwithstanding some degree of overlap, the phenomenon of Islamization in southern Thailand has in many ways taken on different forms of expression as compared to other regions of the country.

Notwithstanding the historical salience of external influences on Islamic faith and creed in Thailand, little has been written (apart from the fine work of Alexander Horstmann and Ernesto Braam on the Jemaat Tabligh) on the transnational nature of contemporary Islam in the country. The purpose of this paper then, is to reflect on the transnational dimensions of the complex and heterogeneous nature of Muslim identities and communities in Thailand by providing a preliminary assessment of key transnational Muslim networks in the social and political dynamics of the country.

This relationship of transnational and local forces must be seen against the backdrop of the globalization of ideas, the diffusion of religious authority, and the extent to which external religious influences are contesting local religious and cultural boundaries.

This paper argues that one must look at the relationship between transnational religious forces and "local Islam" in Thailand to better understand the influence of transnational Islamic forces in the country. This relationship of transnational and local forces must be seen against the backdrop of the globalization of ideas, the diffusion of religious authority, and the extent to which external religious influences are contesting local religious and cultural boundaries. Along these lines, the

[530] For a discussion on Islam's penetration into Siamese society, see Andrew D. W. Forbes, "Thailand's Muslim Minorities: Assimilation, Secession, or Coexistence?" *Asian Survey* 22, no.11 (November 1982).

paper observes that the monopoly of traditional religious authority is eroding as power, influence, and legitimacy are becoming more dispersed across Thailand's Muslim community.

To better understand this situation, the paper examines three key transnational Islamic networks operating in Thailand—the Ihkwanul (i.e., Muslim Brotherhood) influenced Young Muslim Association of Thailand (YMAT), the Jemaat Tabligh, and the Salafi-Reformist network. The paper assesses the agenda and methods of these networks, as well as their evolving roles and the structures and conduits through which they operate. The paper examines these groups' origins, their ideologies and activism, local responses to their activities, their links to external actors, networks, and countries, and their relations with the state. Because the vast majority of Muslims in Thailand are geographically concentrated in the provinces of Patani, Yala, and Narathiwat, these border provinces will form the geographical focus of the paper.

In its final section, the paper assesses the extent to which transnational actors and forces have influenced or shaped the ongoing violence in Thailand's southern provinces. The paper concludes with a discussion of the current status of transnational Islam in Thailand, including relevant policy implications emerging from the paper's key findings.

Young Muslim Association of Thailand

The Young Muslim Association of Thailand (YMAT) is one of the most active and well-connected Islamic organizations in Thailand.

Origins

Young Muslim Association of Thailand was established on October 13, 1964 by a small group of Muslim businessmen and university students in Bangkok. Its founder was an army officer, Colonel Udom Tappawatana, and its first president was Damrong Samutcojorn. Since Damrong, YMAT has had twenty presidents. The current president is Nikmanasay Sama-ali, a director from a Thai public school in Patani and resident of Yala province, one of the three Malay-Muslim majority provinces in the south. Since 1997, the president of the organization has been a southern Thai Malay-Muslim.

YMAT's roots are modest—it began as a small Muslim community club modeled after the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) that met regularly to discuss a range of social issues confronting Thailand's Muslim community. Beyond these meetings, the activities of the early YMAT also included participation in mosque-based programs. These low-key and community based activities soon gave way to more prominent forms of activism. Influenced by the global Islamic resurgence in the mid-1970s, YMAT began to imbibe much of the Ikhwanul-style social activism taking place in Muslim societies across the world which was modeled after the Ikhwanul Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood), the Egyptian mass-based social and political movement. In many ways, this "awakening" was further facilitated by the climate of democratization which had engulfed Thailand in the wake of the pro-democracy student movements of the mid-1970s.

The objective of this heightened activism was to "strengthen the faith and religious identity" of Muslims across Thailand.[531] At this time, YMAT's popularity within Thailand also expanded exponentially as it drew into its membership ranks many Thai Muslim students returning from

[531] Interview with Abdul Roziz Kanie, Phuket, May 25, 2008.

tertiary education institutions across the Islamic world. Needless to say, these students formed yet another critical conduit for the influx of reformist and Ikhwanul-based ideas through the lectures and talks, community outreach programs, and "summer camps" they organized.[532] The organization's renaissance reached its apex in the 1980s, when, according to one of its senior leaders, YMAT "reached out to Muslim civic and social leaders and Muslim politicians. We (the YMAT leadership) urged them to embrace Islam in their social activities and succeeded in many respects. We encouraged the Muslim voters to vote for Muslim candidates who are actually practicing their faith."[533]

Ideology

Despite its formation a decade earlier, it was in the mid-1970s, when YMAT'S *aqidah* (faith) was firmly anchored on the global Islamic resurgence, that the organization developed a strong ideological blueprint. Inspired, as noted above, by the ideals of the Ikhwanul Muslimin, as well as an increasingly active Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia or Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) under the effervescent leadership of Anwar Ibrahim, YMAT premised its social activism on the belief that Allah had revealed Islam to Muslims to guide them in their lives. To that effect, the message underlying YMAT activism was that the revelation of Islam was not a matter to be confined to the realms of personal faith but, rather, that it informed a Muslim's conduct in the social, political, and economic spheres as well since Islam was the only ideology necessary for Muslims to navigate and surmount the problems confronting humankind.[534]

Apart from the works of prominent Ikhwanul thinkers such as Hassan al-Banna and Rashid Rid'a, the radical ideas of Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi and Maulana Maududi also exerted strong intellectual influence on YMAT's leadership, although Anwar Ibrahim came into increasing prominence as the relationship with ABIM strengthened.[535]

While YMAT's social activism was generally accepted, their attempt to transmit some of the ideas underpinning their work was met occasionally with some degree of suspicion. One of the most controversial examples was YMAT's attempt to translate the work of Sayyid Qutb (specifically, *Milestones*) into the Thai language, a move that was frowned upon by government authorities. The following recollection of a member of the YMAT Advisory Council of the controversy surrounding the translation of Qutb's work is illustrative of the gulf in perception between YMAT and the Thai government:

> They (the Thai government) only wanted to see the militant side of Qutb and his language of revolution. But we saw a moral message in his work. The Thai authorities didn't understand that Qutb's work was a response to the problem in the Arab society. We, on the other hand, were not interested in carrying out a revolution. We are a minority, religiously speaking, in this country. The Arab Muslims were the majority in the Middle East and Qutb's message was in response to their predicament. We don't view ourselves as some immigrants coming here to profit from the land. In other words, we don't challenge the

532 Interview with Saravud Sriwan-nayos, Bangkok, May 27, 2008.

533 Ibid.

534 Interview with Nikmanasay Sama-ali, Yala, May 24, 2008. The YMAT's motto "Islam is the way of life," reflects this fundamental principle of the organization. See http://www.ymat.org.

535 See Raymond Scupin, "The Politics of Islamic Reformism in Thailand," *Asian Survey* 20, no.12 (December 1980): 1233; M. Kamal Hassan, "The Influence of Mawdudi's Thought on Muslims in Southeast Asia," *The Muslim World* 93 (July/August 2003).

> notion of the Thai nation-state. We are just trying to carry out work to ensure the continuity and strengthening of our community in Thailand.[536]

Given that much of Western scholarship tends to demonize Sayyid Qutb as the "godfather" of Muslim extremism, the fact that YMAT's modernist leaders look to his writings as a source of inspiration is instructive of the gulf in perception between Muslims and the West in how they read and understand the implications of the works of major Islamic thinkers. The Western policy community would do well to take cognizance of this gulf.

More broadly, YMAT leaders claim not to promote any particular school of jurisprudential thought, although in private they have opined that many of their members can be considered "Salafi" in creedal orientation. Nevertheless, according to the leadership, "tolerance is important and we (YMAT) don't put up with people who come in and try to split the association. YMAT's members are people who have been around and see many aspects of Islam and Muslim communities."[537]

YMAT Activism and Contemporary Politics

Notwithstanding YMAT's political activism during the turbulence of the 1970s, this reformist movement failed to transform into a major mainstream political force—both globally, in the wake of the Islamic resurgence, as well as locally in Thailand, as a consequence of the October 1973 student revolution and its aftermath.

Subscription to ABIM-style political agitation in the 1970s did not appeal to all members of the YMAT and became a matter of great debate among its founding leadership. Tensions that arose within the organization as a consequence of its alignment with ABIM undermined the organization's ability to articulate a coherent voice representing the interests of Muslim students in Thailand. Beyond that, YMAT's zealous reformist ideals also led to occasional altercations with traditional Muslim community leaders over matters like improvements to the structure and curriculum of the *pondok* (traditional Islamic schools which provide only religious instruction).[538]

According to Scupin, one of the most astute longtime observers of Islam in Thailand, YMAT's failure to become a mainstream political force was a result of the movement's inability to garner sympathy and support from traditionalists who harbored apprehensions toward the perceived radical bent of YMAT's activism.[539] Nevertheless, YMAT continued with its political activism through the 1980s and 1990s, albeit on a smaller scale, primarily by "encouraging Muslim voters to vote for Muslim candidates who are actually practicing their faith."[540]

Social outreach and education are the primary avenues of YMAT's involvement in Thailand's Muslim minority communities. To that effect, it is not surprising to find that Muslim students were a major target of YMAT recruitment because they were seen to have "more leadership potential than any other target group."[541]

According to their leaders, YMAT was the first Muslim organization to introduce *Qira' ati* (pre-school) Islamic education in southern Thailand geared toward supplementing the compulsory

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536 Interview with Saravud Sriwan-nayos, Bangkok, May 27, 2008.

537 Interview with Saravud Sriwan-nayos, Bangkok, May 27, 2008.

538 Interview with Pakorn Priyakorn, Islamic Central Committee of Thailand, Bangkok, January 25, 2005.

539 See Scupin, "The Politics of Islamic Reformism in Thailand," 1231. This was confirmed in the course of an interview with Pakorn Priyakorn, Bangkok, January 25, 2005.

540 Interview with Saravud Sriwan-nayos, Bangkok, May 27, 2008.

541 Interview with Nikmanasay Sama-ali, Yala, May 24, 2008. Other target groups include youths (in general), scholars and intellectuals, politicians and political activists, business people, Mosque committee members, and local leaders.

national education system for pre-schoolers. Since 1990, YMAT has been training *Qira' ati* teachers at monthly workshops, in cooperation with local *tambon* (district) and provincial administrative centers and the various provincial Islamic committees in the region. At present, there are up to 10,000 people enrolled in this program.[542] These workshops are run as *usroh* (study groups) for *tafsir al-Qur'an* (Qur'anic studies) centered in Bangkok, Patani, Yala, Songkla, and Krabbi.

In terms of social outreach, YMAT also collects *zakat* (donation) during Ramadan for purposes of welfare work among the poor as well as the provision of scholarships for Muslim students, and is active in public education on broader social matters such as HIV awareness.

External Links

Beyond local education and social outreach, YMAT is also plugged into international networks of Islamic social activist organizations. However, these connections are comparatively low-key when compared to YMAT's activism on the local front.[543] Human rights activism has been a major transnational pursuit, where YMAT has contributed funds and participated in human rights campaigns in Kosovo, Palestine, and Iraq. More recently, YMAT participated in the Global Peace Vision Malaysia initiative to establish medical clinics in Afghanistan.[544]

At home, YMAT has worked with agencies such as the National Reconciliation Commission, the National Committee of Human Rights of Thailand, the International Law Association of Thailand, UNICEF, International Red Cross, etc., on various issues relating to the conflict in southern Thailand.

However, YMAT has also been highly selective of its partners in various initiatives. For instance, the organization has rejected funding offers from the Asia Foundation on the grounds that YMAT has to consider "the feeling of the people, especially the Muslim community."[545] Similarly, for their health and HIV awareness programs, YMAT leaders have rebuffed overtures from the Thai Health Promotion Foundation because they derive a percentage of their income from taxes on tobacco and alcohol. Consequently, the YMAT leadership considers this funding to be "unclean" (*wang dari benda haram*/*wang berdosa*).

The Jemaat Tabligh

The Jemaat Tabligh is an Islamic grassroots *dakwah* (missionary) movement that is rooted in the broader reformist tradition and is primarily focused on the purification of the Muslim community. This movement is becoming an increasingly assertive socio-religious force among Thailand's Muslims.

Origins

The Jemaat Tabligh, an Islamic grassroots *dakwah* (missionary) movement that is rooted in the broader reformist tradition and is primarily focused on the purification of the Muslim community, is an increasingly assertive socio-religious force among Thailand's Muslims. The Jemaat Tabligh

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542 Ibid.

543 According to a YMAT Advisory Council member, this is because the organization "does not have the resources to do international outreach… and there is no money for international networking." Interview with Saravud Sriwan-nayos, Bangkok, May 27, 2008.

544 Interview with Saravud Sriwan-nayos, Bangkok, May 27, 2008.

545 Ibid.

originated in South Asia as part of an Islamic reform movement in the mid-nineteenth century that focused on religiosity, observance, and personal devotion. Put simply, the focus of Tabligh activism is to replicate the prophetic lifestyle as dictated in the hadith (i.e., the sayings, actions, and thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad).

The activities of the Jemaat Tabligh are highly mobile, decentralized, and transnational in nature. However, in the case of southern Thailand, most of the movement's activities originate from the Markaz Dakwah Yala in the outskirts of Yala and, to a lesser extent, Bangkok, where *shura* councils consisting of groups of elders meet to vet candidates for *khuruj* (when Muslims join the Tabligh movement and travel across the region and overseas, covering as many nodes of the Tabligh network as possible, to preach over periods ranging from three days to four months).

Tabligh members come from a varied background, which includes professionals such as engineers, doctors, teachers, lawyers, and university students, as well as farmers and businessmen.[546] These members are known for their ascetic lifestyle. Replicating the Prophet's *hijrah* (migration from Mecca to Medina), the Jemaat Tabligh is in essence a "revolving door" movement where Tabligh activities recruit "on-the-move" and often entail members leaving their homes and villages on *khuruj* for *dakwah* activities.

The Tabligh movement in southern Thailand is led by locals who are usually educated in Pakistan, and they anchor groups of Tabligh traveling preachers undertaking door-to-door preaching. They also organize study circles at local mosques called Masjidwar Jemaat. True to the transnational nature of the movement, not to mention the legacy and reputation of Ustaz Mahmud,[547] the activism of Thailand's Jemaat Tabligh movement also extends beyond Thailand's borders. For example, several prominent Thai Tabligh members are religious teachers and *imam* (including Imam Salat Tarawih or leaders of the Ramadhan prayers) in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam.

While some Tabligh activities had surfaced in the 1960s, it was in the late 1970s that the Jemaat Tabligh movement gained a foothold in southern Thailand as a result of the activism of Indian Muslim traders who had traveled to the region and who introduced their teachings to the public and students.[548] The growth of the Jemaat Tabligh movement in Thailand was accelerated by the presence of several notable religious teachers among its ranks who lent much needed credibility to the hitherto unfamiliar Islamic movement. Among the more prominent of these leaders were Ustaz Mahmud bin Hayee Ismail and Ustaz Zakaria Al-Fathoni.[549]

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546 See Ernesto Braam, "Traveling with the Tablighi Jamaat in South Thailand," *ISIM Review* 17, (Spring 2006): 42. Braam suggests that up to 20,000 people conduct their *dakwah* every year in southern Thailand.

547 Ustaz Mahmud bin Hayee Ismail trained in Islamic studies first at Pondok Paderu in Yala and then in *dakwah* in universities in Jordan and Pakistan. Mahmud established the first religious school in southern Thailand that is known to be associated with the Jemaat Tabligh, Madrassa Tahfiz Alkuran, in Yala province approximately fifty years ago. According to educators at Madrassa Tahfiz Alkuran, the school was established for the purpose of "returning Muslims to the Qur'an so as to attain true spiritual peace in their lives similar to that which the followers of the holy Prophet enjoyed." Interview at Madrassa Tahfiz Alkuran, Yala, December 11, 2006. Aside from local *dakwah* activities, Mahmud has given southern Thailand's Jemaat Tabligh movement international branding with his Tabligh work in Asia, Europe, and Africa.

548 Interview with Ustaz Mahmud, general manager of Markaz Yala, Yala, May 21, 2008. Ustaz Mahmud described the process in the following manner:

> Jemaat Dakwah Tabligh started entering Thailand around 1979. Masjid Jami, built in Sungei Golok, Narathiwat in 1983, was the first Tabligh center established in the three territories of southern Thailand. Later, we bought a place at the city area/seaport of Muang Yala, which is the Yala center now, as big as 21 *rais* (33,600.00 sqm), and we built a *musalla* (prayer place) temporarily to carry out the Jemaat activities. In 1993, we built a mosque on an area as big as 4 *rais* (6,400.00 sqm) (which is still not ready yet), and we used up about 110 million baht of our budget, which came from alms from religious believers and donations from the rich of the country. We never accepted money from any organizations outside of the country.

549 Based in Yala, Ustaz Zakaria is a popular Tabligh speaker who has traveled widely throughout Southeast Asia, and is the head of Jemaat Mastura, which is the female arm of the Jemaat Tabligh. Married women are permitted to partake in Tabligh activities, but have to live with either relatives or female friends.

The influence of the Jemaat Tabligh in Thailand peaked during the period 1986-96, when it was led by the charismatic Emir Yusoff Khan Pakara, a native of Tak province. Upon his passing, the movement became somewhat decentralized, with several centers of Jemaat Tabligh activity strewn throughout the south and in Bangkok, mostly operating independent of each other.

Local and Transnational Tabligh Networks

Tabligh activism in southern Thailand revolves around a network consisting of the Yala center, mosques (*mahallah*), and study groups (*halaqah*). This local network facilitates the *khuruj* mentioned above. According to sources, this network has some 800 mosques in the southern provinces and about 127 *halaqah* which themselves network among the congregation of anywhere between 6-10 mosques. In addition to this, there are a total of 21 *muassah mahallah*—mosques through which formal *khuruj* pilgrimages are arranged and managed—in the three provinces.

Insofar as Islamic education is concerned, there are around sixty schools in Thailand that have either been directly established by Jemaat Tabligh or are closely affiliated with it. Known by their generic name of Madrassa Tahfiz Alkuran, after the original school in Yaha, Yala, most of these schools are located around Bangkok (Minburi), Nakhon Si Thammarat, Tak (Mae-sod), Yala (Klorek and Bachok), and Narathiwat (Sungei Golok, Dusun Nyor, and Chanet).[550] The original Madrassa Tahfiz Alkuran is a three-building institution which is currently headed by Al-Hafiz Abdullah Yamaloh.

Unlike mainstream Islamic schools, however, Tabligh schools are private institutions and are not registered with the government. Many of these schools are recipients of support from foreign, primarily South African, Tabligh organizations and members. The students who graduate from these local Tabligh schools are known to proceed on to Pakistan to further their Islamic education in schools linked to the Jemaat Tabligh.[551]

Between the Markaz Dakwah Yala, whose religious classes are supervised by Ustaz Abdurrahman Phatlung, and Madrassa Tahfiz Alkuran, which remains the largest Tabligh-linked religious school in southern Thailand, Jemaat Tabligh schools have approximately 5,000 students in total.[552] Most of these students either have or will proceed to further their education in Tabligh institutions in South Africa, Yemen, Sudan, Jordan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.[553]

The Jemaat Tabligh in Thailand continues to enjoy strong ties with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and, increasingly, South Africa. The 1.5-acre Markaz Dakwah Yala arguably remains the largest Tabligh center in the Asia-Pacific region and has been endowed with a special sanctity in the eyes of local Muslims.[554] Needless to say, the popularity of the Markaz is not confined to locals: co-religionists from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines are also drawn to the Yala center and regularly visit the mosque to undertake their own *dakwah*.

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[550] According to Imtiaz Yusuf, there had been other attempts by the Jemaat Tabligh to build schools in Bangkok, but these were rebuffed by the Muslim community. Conversation with Imtiaz Yusuf, Bangkok, January 14, 2006. The figure of 60 was suggested by Tabligh members during an interview at Madrassa Tahfiz Alkuran, Yala, December 11, 2006.

[551] Interview with Pakorn Priyakorn, Secretary-General, Islamic Center of Thailand, Bangkok; email interview with a local Malay-Muslim scholar, February 2, 2006.

[552] Given the nature of the Jemaat Tabligh, which effectively has a "rotating door" approach to membership, we need to appreciate that it is impossible to obtain definite figures regarding the organization. Any Muslim can volunteer to do *dakwah* with the Jemaat Tabligh without necessarily committing to the organization itself in any formal capacity.

[553] Interview at Markaz Tahfiz Alkuran, Yala, December 11, 2006.

[554] Interview at Yala Islamic College, Yala, January 18, 2005. The lecturer at the Yala Islamic University had enthused: "I love to pray at the Markaz because it is almost like praying in Mecca."

Local Activism and Responses

The Jemaat Tabligh differs from similar *dakwah* movements in that Tablighs concentrate their efforts in rural communities.[555] Since the mid-1980s, Jemaat Tabligh adherents, including foreign Jemaat, have been traveling regularly to Muslim villages in the southern provinces, preaching their own version of purist Islam against traditional practices along the way as part of their *dakwah*.[556] Tabligh members, as noted above, liken this manner of piety to the Prophet's own missionary efforts as a traveling teacher and preacher, which they deliberately seek to emulate in their endeavor to spread Islam's message throughout the region. These Jemaat Tabligh members are known to visit most, if not all, of the villages in the southern provinces at least once a week, and cover every house in the village.[557]

Among the local community there is considerable disagreement about the Jemaat Tabligh as a new interpretation of the faith and expression of religiosity: some feel that the Tabligh is the epitome of piety while others assail the movement for being misguided, and for misguiding Muslims. Reasons cited for opposition to the Tabligh movement range from practical to epistemological, theological, and doctrinal. At its most mundane, the characteristic dress of the Tablighs—white robes called *thawb* and turbans (*taqiya*) which are worn to imitate the dress of the Prophet as well as to ward off the devil—are foreign to traditional circles in the southern Thai provinces.

More substantive differences percolate beneath the surface, particularly between the Jemaat Tabligh and some Salafi-Reformists. In the main, the latter have raised doubts as to the doctrinal authenticity and purity of the Jemaat Tabligh and have criticized their apparent use of Sufi techniques to instruct new recruits on meditation and self-control.[558] The opposition of Salafi-Reformists is perhaps explained at least in part from the fact that the Jemaat Tabligh is frowned upon in Saudi Arabia, a major source of Salafi-Wahhabi thinking. In addition, some religious scholars have argued that an approach to *dakwah* which amounts to what they consider to be the abandonment of family or neglect of educational responsibilities (as these critics claim followers of the Tabligh are effectively doing when they depart on the *khuruj*), cannot be said to be a correct emulation of the Prophet and the Salaf (the early followers of the Prophet).[559]

Intellectually, Salafi-Reformist scholars go to the extent of dismissing the Tabligh movement altogether, disparaging their members as Muslims who are "misdirected." Jemaat Tabligh members

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555 The "*dakwah*" movement in Malaysia, for instance, is focused on student organizations and university campuses. See A.B. Shamsul, "Inventing Certainties: The *Dakwah* Persona in Malaysia," in *The Pursuit of Certainty: Religious and Cultural Formulations*, Wendy James, ed. (London: Routledge, 1995). Having said that, there are tertiary education students who are members of the Jemaat Tabligh in southern Thailand.

556 Alexander Horstmann informed the author that the Thai chapter of the Jemaat Tabligh might have as many as 200,000 members.

557 See Alexander Horstmann, "The Tablighi Jama'at, Transnational Islam, and the Transformation of Self between Southern Thailand and South Asia," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 27, no.1 (2007).

558 Dietrich Reetz, "Sufi Spirituality Fires Reformist Zeal: The Tablighi Jamaat in Today's India and Pakistan," paper presented at the workshop titled "Modern Adaptations of Sufi-Islam," Berlin, April 4-5, 2003.

559 Indeed, an *ustaz* (teacher) interviewed remarked tersely that some Tabligh members were setting a bad example for "while they (Tabligh members) ventured to other villages to preach, their wives back home do not pray nor wear the headscarf, and the children are left without a disciplinarian." The teacher further noted that participation in Tabligh activities also meant that women had to take over the responsibility of supporting the household in their husband's absence, and that this had a negative effect on the children's discipline at home. Interview at Azizstan School, Yala, January 11, 2005.

One traditionalist religious teacher accused the "*dakwah* people" (what Tabligh members are sometimes referred to colloquially) of being close–minded. Interview at Tabia Witthaya, Yala, August 2, 2006. The *ustaz* opined: "When I asked them about what their wife and children are going to eat, they (Tabligh) said God's work is above everything else. All they say is *Allah* this, *Allah* that. *Dakwah* is about form and not much substance."

have also been disparaged for their purportedly weak knowledge of Islam.[560] Similarly, the Jemaat Tabligh has also been approached with a fairly considerable degree of caution by certain segments of the orthodox Malay-Muslim Shafi'i-Sunni community because of the pressure the Tabligh exerts on these communities to turn away from their age-old cultural traditions. Hence, while some Salafi-reformists view the Jemaat Tabligh to be "too Sufi" in orientation, traditionalists are of the converse opinion, i.e., that they are "not Sufi enough."

The point to stress here, though, is that in the eyes of traditionalists and orthodox Muslims, the Jemaat Tabligh threatens to undermine traditional Thai Islam and polarize Muslim society by generating debates and discourses of difference within the community that, in turn, lead to contending claims of authority. Anthropologists have documented how these contestations between the Jemaat Tabligh and traditional/orthodox Muslims have been expressed, for example, in the challenge that Tabligh members pose to traditional authority in the *pondok*, Islamic private schools, and the local mosques where younger, charismatic Jemaat Tabligh leaders overtly contest the stature and authority of more senior teachers and imam.

The profile of the Jemaat Tabligh leadership in Thailand also differs somewhat from the orthodox Malay-Muslim community in terms of their education. The former, as noted above, are usually educated in Pakistan while the latter receive training in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Indonesia. It is unclear, however, if this issue of religious training contributes further to the gulf between the movement and its more orthodox and traditionalist counterparts.

Relations with the State

While Jemaat Tabligh groups often times come under intense scrutiny in other countries, in Thailand the movement has mostly been spared harassment by the Thai government. The government has, in fact, endorsed and supported the movement. This endorsement is evident from actions such as Bangkok's support of the staging of an inaugural Tabligh convention in 1982 at an army camp in Kai Sirintong, Patani. From the Thai government's perspective, supporting the Jemaat Tabligh has yielded welcome dividends as, apparently, large numbers of Malay-Muslim separatists and insurgents evidently abandoned their struggle and surrendered their arms after taking up membership in the Jemaat.[561]

Another possible reason for the Thai government's relatively benign view of the Jemaat Tabligh is the movement's avowed apolitical stance. The notion of political quietism is stressed through Tabligh mosques and educational institutions. For instance, a central tenet of Tabligh lifestyle which is preached at the Markaz Dakwah Yala is that followers should avoid politics, debates, rankings, and philanthropists.[562]

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560 For instance, Tabligh instructors are often taken to task for their alleged use of "lesser" hadith such as those contained in the *Fazail A'maal*. We should bear in mind here that this criticism of the "lesser hadith" is a common, often polemical, device through which Muslims contest and counter alternative traditions within Islam.

561 This view was expressed by several Malay-Muslim community leaders during field interviews conducted in Patani in July 2005.

562 Interview with Ustaz Mahmud, general manager of Markaz Yala, Yala, May 21, 2008.

Salafi-Based Reformism in Thailand

The network of reformist madrassas and Islamic centers that are either run by or associated with prominent Salafi ulama is one of southern Thailand's most prominent Islamic networks and is increasing both in terms of popularity as well as its impact on traditional Muslim society.

Origins and Leadership

The fact that Islam in Thailand originated from South Asia is significant with regards to the Salafi-Reformist movement given the contribution of the South Asian Muslim diaspora communities serving as conduits for the influx of Islamic reformist and modernist ideas into Bangkok. South Asian Muslims also created the Jamiyatul Islam, which was modeled along the lines of the modernist Jamaat-i Islami, formed by Abdul Ala Maududi in Pakistan. The Jamiyatul Islam proved to be a major vehicle through which Direk Kulsiriwad, often seen as the pioneer of Islamic reformism in Bangkok, propagated reformist thought in Bangkok. Reformists have also worked through radio talk shows, religious schools, and monthly publications such as Al-Jihad and Al-Hidaya (the latter remains in circulation) to disseminate their ideas.

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Aside from a number of madrassas (approximately twenty), stewardship of Salafi-Reformist dogma is centered on three key networks—Majlis Ilmi (Patani), Majlis Tafakkuh (Yala), and Jamiyah Dakwah Patani (Patani).[563] These networks revolve around district offices (in the three provinces of Yala, Patani, and Narathiwat) managed by a *naqeeb* (captain), and are engaged in weekly *usroh* meetings. At times, the propagation of Salafi-Reformist teachings also take place during evening forums, lectures, and courses after *salat maghrib* (evening prayers). Yet, notwithstanding the presence of several charities and Islamic organizations, the Salafi-Reformist network in southern Thailand is anchored in the Yala Islamic University.

Historically, in the context of southern Thailand, the proponents of reformist thinking have come to be known as the *Kaum Muda* (*Khana Mai* or New Generation). Haji Sulong Abdul Kadir, Jahi Abdullah Benaekebong, and Ustaz Abdullah Chinarong, who is also known locally as Abdullah India owing to his religious training in Deoband, India, were some of its early leaders. Since his return from Saudi Arabia, where he obtained a doctorate in comparative Islamic

[563] According to local religious and community leaders, aside from Bamrung Islam Witthaya school (at which Ismail Lutfi is the principal), the main Salafi-Reformist schools in southern Thailand are Islahiyah Nadtokmong (Muang, Yala), Islam Phattanasat Witthaya Bangpu (Yaring, Patani), Suksan Sasana Witthaya (Muang Narathiwat), Islam Dua (Tung Yang-Daeng, Patani), and Islam Prachasongkroh Bede (Tung Yang-Daeng, Patani).

jurisprudence from the Islamic University of Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud in Riyadh, Ismail Lutfi Japakiya (alias Ismail Lutfi al-Fatani) has emerged as the most prominent personality and leader of the reformist movement in southern Thailand today.[564]

Local Responses

The presence and expanding influence of Salafi-Reformists in Thailand (primarily, but not exclusively, in the south) has thus been a matter of some concern for traditionalist religious leaders. Not surprisingly, this concern stems from the teachings and actions of the Salafi-Reformists who, aside from their critique of the traditionalists' excessive reliance on *mazhab* (schools of Islamic jurisprudence), openly reject certain traditional practices long associated with local Malay culture and religion as "un-Islamic."[565]

Seeking to amputate mysticism from Islam, Salafi-Reformists are highly critical of practices associated with the vibrant Sufi traditions in Malay folk Islam such as the use of prayer beads and holy water, as well as celebrations commonly associated with Malay culture, such as the *Dikir Barat* and *Wayang Kulit*. Likewise, reformist scholars and teachers express reservations towards traditional beliefs, still held in many quarters of rural communities, that certain well-known *tok guru* of popular *pondok* are *berkat* (blessed). In response, traditionalists have berated their reformist counterparts in their condemnation of local beliefs and practices. The traditionalists see the Salafi-Reformists' influence as incompatible with the local *adat* (customs) that remains an important institution in Malay culture.[566]

According to some religious leaders, the debates between the *Kaum Tua* (*Khana Lau* or Old Generation) and the *Kaum Muda* peaked during the period 1992 to 1997. Among the most vocal *tok guru* of the *Kaum Tua* who spoke out against the Salafi-Reformists were Heng Lubok Sawa (or Tuan Guru Ibrahim, from Marathiwat), Loh Saroh (or Tuan Guru Abdullah, from Patani), and, perhaps the most famous of Patani's contemporary generation of Ulama Jawi, Tuan Guru Ismail Sepanjang of the famed Pondok Darul Muhajreen in Patani.[567]

A key underlying concern that has provoked this confrontation is that the increasing popularity of the Salafi-Reformists is perceived in some quarters as a threat to the traditional authority of the more orthodox religious leaders. Nevertheless, because of the stature of Ismail Lutfi and other

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564 Prior to obtaining his Ph.D, Ismail Lutfi obtained a B.A. in *usuluddin* (religious principles) from Madinah University and an M.A. in comparative *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) at the Ibn Saud. Lutfi's Salafi-Reformist credentials are all the more surprising given his background in traditional, orthodox southern Thai Islam. His father, AbdurrahmanJapakiya, was a *tok guru* (traditional teacher of Islamic studies) of the traditionalist orthodox Shafi'i-Sufi mould who had, among other things, also taught in the famed Ulama Jawi *halaqah* in Saudi Arabia.

565 Describing how conflicts between *Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda* surfaced during this period, a religious teacher observed:

> The conflict usually arises when those in *masyarakat bawahan* (grassroots) accept these new teachings through an interlocutor who himself does not have in-depth knowledge, is *biadat* (lacking in courtesy), and who claims that *Kaum Tua* are not adhering to the correct Islamic teachings. Likewise, those who reject the Salafi-Wahhabi movement do so in a harsh manner as well. Usually, the conflicts arise due to trivial comparative religious issues such as the prohibition of weaving a three-sided *ketupat* (rice dumpling) because it is associated with Hinduism and the worship of Hindu idols, the recitation of *qunut* (special prayers) during *subuh* (dawn prayers), celebrating *maulidin-nabi* (the Prophet's birthday), and others. The Salafi-Wahhabi movement always rejects such observances which have become customary to the local population without considering the positive or negative aspects of these issues, and whether it is really against religious teachings or not. But we (*Kaum Tua*) see that if such observances do not contradict the religion, then it should be protected, but the Salafi-Wahhabi movement view it categorically as *bid'a* which is prohibited in religion.
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> Interview with Babo Broheng Payedueramae, Narathiwat, May 21, 2008.

566 Interview at Aliman Foundation, Narathiwat, January 18, 2006. While the Salafi-Reformists justify their attacks on tradition as "improving the community's understanding of and adherence to Islam," traditionalists have retorted that the Salafi-Reformists are "self-righteous." Interview at Pondok Dalor, Patani, January 19, 2006.

567 Ulama Jawi was the name given to Islamic teachers from the Malay World who came to prominence in Mecca and Medinah in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as famed religious teachers of Malay *halaqah*. The name continues to be used for the coterie of Southeast Asian Islamic teachers who still teach in these Islamic centers today. Needless to say, not all are Salafi and/or Wahhabi in orientation.

ulama associated with the Salafi-Reformist movement, such as Ismail Ali, Abdulghani Kahama, Yusuf Sidek, and Ismail Dusong-nyo,[568] and the broad respect these religious leaders command among the local population (at least for their eloquence in Arabic), some traditionalist scholars have attempted to distinguish between the reformists' religious "ideology," which to these scholars is still acceptable, and their "approach."[569]

As the most prominent of the Salafi-Reformist scholars, it should be no surprise that Ismail Lutfi has come to personify the challenge that the reform movement poses to traditionalists, and hence this leader has come under intense (and, at times, personal) scrutiny and criticism. Lutfi's close links with Saudi Arabia have also provided fodder for his critics. Despite somewhat sophisticated approaches to Islamic doctrine and praxis, traditionalist scholars, not to mention some Western analysts, have taken to casually labeling Lutfi a "Wahhabi." Attempts have also been made to discredit his broader reformist agenda as the "Arabization" of the Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand.

Nevertheless, typifying the patterns of contestation, Lutfi also has his ardent supporters.[570] Many have favorably interpreted Lutfi's stature and standing in the eyes of the Middle Eastern ulama as a reflection of his credibility and credentials as an Islamic scholar.[571]

Underlying what appears to be a polemical rejection of new ideas is a sense that Salafi-based reformism (or "Wahhabi" as some critics would have it) is undermining core tenets of traditionalist Islam that have held sway in the southern border provinces for centuries, and upon which the historical prestige of Patani as a center of Islamic intellectual effervescence has rested.[572]

Beyond Southern Thailand

Historically, the Salafi-Reformist influence has not been confined to southern Thailand. Particularly at the turn of the twentieth century, Islamic reformist movements in Bangkok and the immediate vicinity of the plains sought to increase their following among Thailand's non-Malay Muslim community. Not surprisingly, there has always been some overlap between the two geographical regions—for instance, Kulsiriwad, mentioned above, was known to have been a close associate of Ismail Ahmed, a Pattalung native (north of Songkhla) who was also an early

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568 Ismail Ali is an assistant professor at the Prince of Songkhla University-Patani Campus; Abdulghani Kahama is secretary of the Islamic Private School Association and principal of Prachasongkroh Bede Islamic School; Yusuf Sidek is a lecturer at the Prince of Songkhla University-Patani Campus, while Ismail Dusong-nyo has relocated to Bangkok.

569 Interview with Nidir Waba, Patani, May 20, 2008. Nidir Waba is the Chairman of the Islamic Private School Association and a highly-respected ulama in southern Thai Muslim circles.

570 One such supporter, a former student, explains his support in the following manner:

> I, as a student of Dr. Ismail (Lutfi), want to state that he never taught his students to create divisions, but taught them to hold firmly to al-Qur'an and Sunnah Nabi (traditions of the Prophet). Everyone loves him and he is our *abi* (father or teacher) even when some parties despise, hate, and create lies about him. I am sure Allah will protect and guard him and his message will take us to the right path. Those who blame him should repent and use their free time to seek knowledge so as to understand the teachings of Dr. Ismail correctly.

Interview, Patani, May 20, 2008.

571 It should be noted here that since being appointed *Amir al Haj* in 2007, Lutfi has through his connections managed to increase Thailand's quota for the annual pilgrimage from 2,000 to 16,000.

572 Describing the impact of Salafi-Reformist Islam on the traditional landscape in southern Thailand, particularly on the Muslim intelligentsia, Abdul Aziz Yanya, President of the Pondok Association of Southern Thailand (*Persatuan Pengajian Pondok Lima Wilayah Thailand Selatan*), opined:

> The Wahhabi understanding which brushes aside the generations of *amalan sunnah* (traditional religious rituals) of the Islamic *ummah* in this country can be said to be spreading among the educated and young intellectuals. They reject the rituals of reading the al-Qur'an for the dead, recitation of *yasin, qunut, tahil, berdoa, berzikir* (all are different types of formal prayers), *ziarah kubur* (visiting of graves), and other rituals of the Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah which have been allowed and encouraged.

In response, Yanya suggests that even though these young reformists condemn traditional rituals as "*bida dan khurafat*" (innovations and superstitions), in truth they are only attracted to the "new thinking" because they want to perform their rituals "fast and quick." Interview with Abdul Aziz Yanya, Patani, May 17, 2008.

proponent of reformist Islamic thought. Despite these links, there have in fact been very little official ties and association between Salafi-Reformists among the Malay-Muslim community with those in the upper regions.

External Support and Transnational Influences

The extensive amount of time that Ismail Lutfi spent in Saudi Arabia allowed him to establish ties with various governments, religious leaders, and Islamic organizations in the Middle East, ties upon which rested the foundation for an extensive network both in the region as well as back in southern Thailand.

The transnational reach that Lutfi possesses across the Muslim world, particularly to the heartland of the Middle East, is clearly evident in the sources and degree of support he has managed to garner for the Yala Islamic University. This has included support from the Saudi-based Islamic Development Bank, the Saudi Ministry of Religious Affairs, the King of Qatar, the King of Kuwait, as well as private donors from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates.[573] Similarly, the profile of Yala Islamic University has increased since its inauguration in 1998 and with its enrolment of Muslim students from the region—primarily Cambodia and China.[574]

Relations with the State: Lutfi's Strategic Role in Denouncing Religious Violence

Pressured by its Western allies, the Thai government proceeded soon after the 9/11 attacks to place a moratorium on Saudi financial contributions to Islamic organizations in the country, as well as the number of Thai Muslim students sent to Saudi Arabia for tertiary religious education. Nevertheless, despite some early apprehension towards his connections to Saudi and Wahhabi interests, as well as a series of allegations made by purported terrorism experts that he was the representative of Jemaah Islamiyah in southern Thailand, Lutfi has become a close associate of the Thai government—or at least key personalities and factions within it—and has been a vital ally in Thailand's own struggle against violence and terrorism in the southern provinces.[575]

Significantly, Lutfi was the first, and thus far only, Thai Islamic scholar to have published a detailed rebuttal of the *Berjihad di Patani*, a document recovered on April 28, 2004 that articulated the religious agenda behind a series of coordinated attacks that took place on that day.[576] He followed this with a major treatise against the use of violence in the name of Islam, clearly as an oblique reference to the ongoing conflict in the south.[577] In his public sermons too, Lutfi has openly condemned the militants' appropriation of Islam to justify their violent acts. He has been equally unequivocal of Muslims who do not abide by the teachings of Islam.

Since these denunciations of religious violence, Lutfi has taken on a number of major government positions. These have included membership in the National Reconciliation Commission, an appointment to the Thai Senate following the 2006 coup, and an advisory role to the *Shaykh ul-*

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573 It should be noted, though, that after 9/11 the Thai government has legislated that all foreign donations have to be channeled through Thai embassies and consulates, and not given directly to the intended recipients.

574 The university had previously also graduated an American and a Swede.

575 In the words of a senior security official, Ismail Lutfi "is very important to us in the south." Interview with a senior Thai security official (Major-General), Singapore, December 11, 2007.

576 From the perspective of religious scholarship, Lutfi's rebuttal should hardly be surprising given his Salafi-Reformist credentials and the very traditionalist, Sufi nature of the *Berjihad di Patani* document.

577 Ismail Lutfi Japakiya, *Islam Agama Penjana Kedamaian Sejagat* [Islam as the Pathway to Harmony] (Alor Star: Pustaka Darussalam, 2005). For a detailed study of this and other aspects of Ismail Lutfi's contribution to Islamic knowledge in southern Thailand, see Joseph Chinyong Liow, *Islam, Education, and Reform in Southern Thailand: Tradition and Transformation* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, forthcoming).

Islam (or Chularajmontri in Thai). Similarly, the Yala Islamic University (previously Yala Islamic College) received a very public endorsement by the Thai royalty when the crown prince visited the college in 2005.

Transnational Islam and Conflict

The outbreak of a seemingly new cycle of violence in January 2004 in the Malay-Muslim provinces of southern Thailand has, not surprisingly, sparked intense interest in the nature, trends, and trajectories of militancy among Malay-Muslim insurgents who have revived the struggle for a separate Patani state. This agenda, though longstanding, appears to be increasingly drawing from religious metaphors.[578] While this is not the place to rehash debates over the origins, motivations, and actors involved in the southern Thailand conflict, some attention should be given to the transnational dimension, or lack thereof, of this conflict.[579]

Security and terrorism experts consistently warn that southern Thailand could attract the intervention of foreign radical jihadi groups if the Thai government continues with its current iron-fisted counter-insurgency policy. According to this view, the perpetuation of sectarian violence between Muslims and Buddhists, purportedly an objective of at least some of those involved in the ongoing violence, could foster the spread of the "global jihad" in Thailand.

Of particular interest from this perspective is the debate on whether Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the Southeast Asian regional terrorist group which has been linked to al Qaeda and known to operate in Indonesia and the southern Philippines, has already established, or is likely to establish, a presence in southern Thailand. Since 2004, there has been no dearth of contentions linking violence in the south to a global jihadi terrorism driven by al Qaeda and the JI with its ambitions of creating an abstract pan-Islamic state.[580] Anecdotal "evidence," such as the fact that several militants killed on April 28 of that year were wearing T-shirts emblazoned with JI or Osama bin Laden logos, is liberally cited.

Others claim to possess "very reliable sources" suggesting that Thai Malay-Muslims have been collaborating for years with Bangladesh-based Muslim militant movements and that Thais were being trained in militant tactics by groups such as the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI).[581] Others argue that "independent estimates already put JI membership in southern Thailand as high as 10,000."[582]

Global Jihadi Terrorism and the Chimera of Southern Thailand

The debate over Thailand's connection with foreign Islamic terrorist groups emerged following the revelation that the Bali bombers had planned their October 2002 attacks in Bangkok. A senior JI member currently under U.S. custody, Afghan-trained Ridwan Issamuddin (or Hambali as he is more popularly known), was also alleged to have planned to attack a number of high profile

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578 For a more in-depth analysis of this issue, see Joseph Chinyong Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics* (Washington D.C.: East-West Center, 2006).

579 See Joseph Chinyong Liow, "International Jihad and Islamic Radicalism in Thailand? Toward an Alternative Explanation," *Asia Policy* 2 (2006).

580 Some examples include: "Thais: Bangkok Embassy Plot Foiled," *CBS News*, June 10, 2003; "The Hard Cell," *Time Magazine*, June 16, 2003; "Jemaah Islamiyah's Terror Campaign," *CNN.com*, February 26, 2004; "Thailand: Al-Qaeda's Second Front," *Washington Times*, May 3, 2004; "Can Thailand Keep a Lid on the South," *Australia Broadcast Service Transcript*, May 8, 2004.

581 See B. Raman, "Bangladesh-Myanmar-Thailand-The Jihadi Corridor," *South Asia Analysis Group*, Paper no.1102, August 28, 2004.

582 John R. Bradley, "Waking up to the Terror Threat in Southern Thailand," *Straits Times*, May 27, 2004.

"soft targets" in Bangkok. These targets included the Bangkok International Airport and a U.S.-owned hotel along the crowded Sukhumvit and Khao San roads which are popular with foreign backpackers. Yet, despite countless suggestions that JI and al Qaeda members may have entered Thailand, there remains no evidence that international jihadist groups have succeeded in penetrating the insurgency in the southern provinces.

The most prominent terrorism case in the country was the arrest in 2002 of four Thai Malay-Muslims who were accused of being JI members.[583] Their defense lawyer, Somchai Neelaphaijit, was later believed to have been abducted by police officers and is now presumed dead (his body has yet to be recovered). In June 2005, however, the case was dismissed when a Thai court ruled that there was insufficient evidence to convict the four suspects of conspiring to bomb foreign embassies in Bangkok and tourist destinations in Pattaya and Phuket.

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Thai security and intelligence have thus far been unable to confirm JI activity in the south. What is clear, however, is that the climate of violence in southern Thailand differs considerably from other JI operational theatres. There is a distinct disinterest in Western targets, the targeting of which has been and remains a trademark of global jihadi terrorist activity. In addition, there have not been any suicide attacks, another trademark of JI and other jihadi terrorist organizations, in southern Thailand.

The militant rhetoric revolving around violence has also differed markedly. While al Qaeda affiliates in Iraq and elsewhere (including JI) proudly claim responsibility for acts of violence and make public calls to jihad, the perpetrators of violence in southern Thailand remain conspicuous in their silence. Insofar as they are concerned, currently there appears to be no urgent need to register "ownership" of violence, make political claims and demands, or even to associate these acts to the clarion call of jihad being issued by al Qaeda and its affiliates. In fact, given the tendency of al Qaeda to trumpet their presence across the globe, it would not be too far-fetched to assume that if, indeed, al Qaeda or any of its affiliates had gained a foothold in southern Thailand, they would have broadcast this achievement through all available mediums by now.[584]

Furthermore, the suggestions of HUJI involvement in the violence of southern Thailand draw a highly questionable causal relationship based primarily on the observation that the tactics used by some of the militants in southern Thailand resonated with those employed by militants in Bangladesh. The hit-and-run tactics of militants operating in southern Thailand, in fact, follow a popular pattern in insurgencies, as do the relatively low yield bomb attacks, and, on their own, do not indicate any specific operational cooperation. Certainly, a HUJI connection never surfaced in

583 Information leading to their arrest came from a Singporean JI member, Arifin bin Ali, aka John Wong, who was apprehended in Bangkok on May 2003 and quickly handed over to the Singaporean government. Press statement from Singapore's Ministry of Home Affairs, June 10, 2003.

584 Consider, for instance, statements made by Ayman al-Zawahiri after the Madrid and London bombings.

any of the admissions and interrogation depositions of captured militants or alleged JI members in Thailand.[585]

According to some reports, international jihadis themselves do not view southern Thailand as fertile soil for their cause.[586] In the present author's interview with Ismail Lutfi, the Saudi-trained Salafi cleric who, as noted above, has been accused by some of being JI's southern Thailand representative, Lutfi revealed that he had met with "*orang keras*" (militants) in Bra-o district (Patani) when three of them attended one of his *khutbahs* (sermons) and asked to discuss religious matters with him. However, according to Lutfi, fundamental differences soon surfaced in their discussion of religious violence, whereupon Lutfi argued with and subsequently dismissed the militants.[587]

That there is little evidence of substantive "external" interest in the southern Thailand conflict, is not to say, however, that members of the JI have not attempted to exploit local grievances for their own interests.[588] In fact, according to some involved in the insurgency, foreigners have expressed interest in the conflict. The following is a quote from one of the insurgency leaders:

> There were guys who claimed to be JI members from Aceh. But they were too much like businessmen trying hard to make a deal. They wanted to sell us arms. They weren't much interested in our cause. These guys could be people disguising themselves as JI. But we don't want to deal with them because if we become like JI, the situation in Patani will become even more complicated—like Iraq, where Muslims kill Muslims. As of now, there are already too many split among our people as to how to carry out this struggle. We don't want to see more Muslims killing Muslims. Also, we don't want to become international terrorists, as this is not our aim. That's why we keep the fight within our border (Patani).[589]

There is little indication that militants engaged in the violence are looking to tap into the nebulous global jihad to augment their capabilities.

This comment suggests a strategic pragmatism on the part of at least some of the insurgents involved in the ongoing violence in Thailand's restive southern provinces. For the insurgents, any contemplation of courting foreign parties has to be weighed against the practical costs. There is little indication that militants engaged in the violence are looking to tap into the nebulous global jihad to augment their capabilities. This view, as reflected above, has been reinforced by the old guard separatists who have returned to the fray, and who have indicated that, while they have a "moral obligation" to liberate Patani, it would be misleading to assume that they are prepared to do so through links to the international jihadist movement or with radical groups such as JI.

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585 See John Funston, "Troubles in the Deep South: Importance of External Linkages?" paper presented at the 9th International Conference on Thai Studies, DeKalb, Illinois, April 3-6, 2005.

586 Anthony Davis, "Thailand faces up to southern extremist threat," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 1, 2003.

587 According to Lutfi, the "*orang keras*" began the conversation by asking about Islam. They then moved on to ask about the oppression of the Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand. It was at this point that Lutfi claimed he became suspicious of their intentions. Following this, the three men raised the issue of violence as a legitimate response to the oppression taking place in the southern provinces. It was at this juncture that Lutfi claimed he argued with the men over the question of the use of violence to resolve the problems in the south, and he subsequently dismissed them. Interview with Ismail Lutfi, Patani, January 14, 2006.

588 See Noor Huda Ismail, "Southern Thailand's Conflict: A Rare Perspective," *Jakarta Post*, March 30, 2008.

589 Interview with a *pemimpin* (leader), Yala, August 13, 2007. It bears noting that there is no evidence that JI has operated in Aceh either.

These leaders, as reflected in the statement above, are conscious of any move that might elicit negative international reactions or delegitimize their struggle. To that effect, any connection with terrorist groups is seen as a guarantee of this. Secondly, collusion with radical jihadi groups such as JI will almost certainly invite a major clampdown from Malaysian authorities. Kuala Lumpur has developed a strong track record of clamping down on groups with radical agendas, particularly those that threaten to undermine the state. On the other hand, Malaysia has also proven a safe haven for exiled Muslim political and separatist leaders. Finally, while the conflict may have taken on new permutations in recent times with increased brutality and civilian casualties, and though the insurgents are employing religious motifs with greater frequency, the fundamental objectives of the insurgency itself remain rooted in historical grievances of marginalization and neglect amplified by perceived ill-treatment from the central authorities. That being the case, insurgents have been cautious about orienting the causes of their struggle towards the ideological agenda of the global jihad as propounded by the likes of al Qaeda and JI.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Despite the fact that Thailand's southern border provinces have long enjoyed a reputation for being a center of Islamic knowledge and learning in Southeast Asia, and where a vibrant Malay-Muslim cultural tradition continues to thrive, the globalization of religious knowledge has meant that, throughout this area, Islam is becoming increasingly influenced by transnational forces that are negotiating the very boundaries of Malay Muslim identity and authority. This is most clearly evident in the prominence of Salafi-based reformism and the activism of the Jemaat Tabligh in the region, as well as the presence of the Bangkok-based YMAT with its strong international and regional networks. Not only are interactions taking place between "transnational" forces and "local" communities in Thailand, in some instances they exist within transnational Islam itself, i.e., between transnational movements. These interactions are most clearly observable in the discussion of the Jemaat Tabligh and the Salafi-Reformists, and speak to the cross-fertilization of Islamic thought and practice that, in turn, adds to the plurality of Islam in Thailand.

The emergence of these new actors has resulted in the pluralization of ideas, weakening of religious monopolies, and the fragmentation of traditional authority in Thailand, giving rise to contestations within the Muslim community because of the epistemological and populist challenge posed to traditionalist Islam that has, until now, held sway particularly in Thailand's Islamic "heartland" of the Malay-Muslim southern provinces. At the center of this contestation are conflicting opinions about the nature and authenticity of religious knowledge and authority, as well as Islam's relationship with local culture and tradition.

Because of this weakening of traditional religious monopolies and the diffusion of religious authority, the engagement of the Malay-Muslim community needs to be an expansive and inclusive process that considers the various alternative centers of local power and the scope of their influence. At the same time, however, any attempt to engage Muslim leaders, groups, and movements in southern Thailand will have to tread carefully so as not to marginalize and alienate pivotal players. Additionally, given these very complex dynamics, any attempt at neat categorization, as policymakers are often inclined to do, can at best be arbitrary. Policymakers would benefit by dealing with issue-specific cases rather than categories of groups and movements.

These contestations have, on occasion, given rise to a localization of transnational influences, where imported ideas are negotiated and adapted to local social and cultural terrains. This negotiation and local adaptation is evident in varying degrees in all the three cases studied above, and speaks of the accommodationist tradition of Thai Islam that can be leveraged on.

That said, the resilience of local norms, culture, and history is arguably best expressed in the script of the ongoing separatist insurgency in southern Thailand. This insurgency remains anchored on a pattern of local resistance dating back at least a century, and has evidently managed to insulate itself from the ideology of the global jihad that has so fixated terrorism and security analysts the world over. Nevertheless, the question remains how, and if, the global and local can in fact reconcile themselves in the context of southern Thailand in a way that will at least preserve, if not further enhance, the central place of Islam in local identity.

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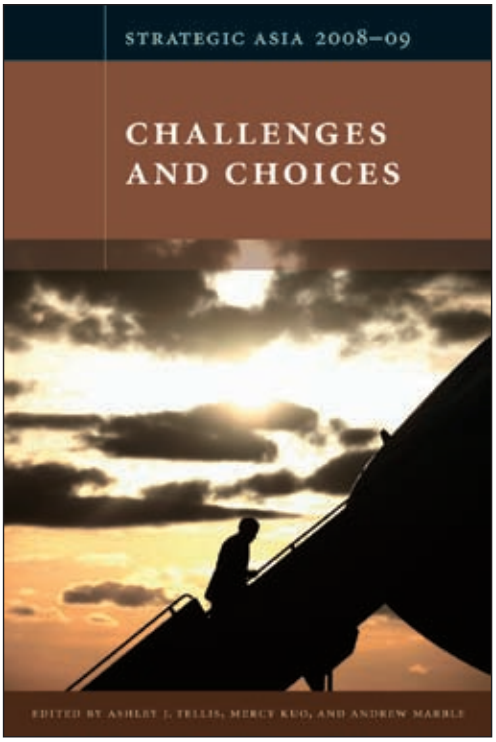

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